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THE DEFENCE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION A NATIONAL HERITAGE

FEW doctrines of the Church have had a history so interesting as that of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. It is indeed sadly ironical that the mass of the English people, who were for many centuries the zealous and proud defenders of this privilege, today hardly know even the meaning of the words. While the great doctors of France, Italy, and Germany dared not allow that the first of the great things which God did for His lowly handmaid was to preserve her from all stain of original sin, there appear never to have been wanting ardent defenders of the doctrine in this country. Here at least it is not a case of England accepting an "alien" creed or devotion from Rome. Rather it was the Roman theologians who were humble enough to listen to Englishmen explaining for them a hidden truth of revelation which none saw with theological clarity before the full flowering of the Anglo-Saxon Church. There are few more evident signs of the great devotion to the Mother of God which won for our land the title of "our Lady's Dowry".

I do not deny that the principles which underlie the doctrine were very clearly seen several centuries earlier, especially in the Greek Church. About the seventh century, moreover, we find them celebrating the Conception of our Lady. But the Conception is not at least expressly the Immaculate Conception, and it is not possible to prove that in those early centuries the celebration of the feast necessarily conveyed the implication of Mary's freedom from original sin. Again, we know that very early evidence is available for an Irish feast or commemoration of the Conception in the beginning of May.¹ But we know little or nothing as to its doctrinal implications, and nothing of its manner of celebration. Clearly the very fact of the difference in date shows that the pre-Norman English feast is more directly connected than the Irish celebration both with the ancient Eastern feast of 9 December, and with the present universal feast of 8 December. The Anglo-Saxons, strangely enough, appear to have been the first to keep the feast on the latter date. I do not think that any evidence is available to explain why England chose the 8th rather than the 9th. At any rate the dates are near enough to exclude any doubt about the connection of our feast with the older one. Possibly the actual connecting link was the Church at Naples; for the feast had already been introduced by the Byzantine Greeks into that city, and certain Benedictine monks of Winchester, Canterbury, and Ramsey² appear to have brought it from Naples into their own monasteries in England.

¹ Cf. Thurston, Herbert, S. J., "The Irish Origins of Our Lady's Conception Feast", in the *Month*, 1904; also Bishop, Edmund, *Liturgica Historica* (1918), pp. 250 ff.

² The evidence for these different monasteries is disputed. Cf. Bishop, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

What exactly did these English Benedictines consider to be the special object of the feast which they introduced, and why did they so enthusiastically defend it? So far as we can tell from the liturgical prayers in the eleventh-century Missal of Leofric, they would appear to have honoured our Lady's Conception after the manner of the later development of the feast in the East. Originally, the oriental feast had celebrated not only the conception of the Mother of God and therein her great foreordained holiness, but also the alleged appearance of an angel announcing this conception to Mary's father, Joachim, and a supposed miraculous conceiving on the part of Anne. In other words, the circumstances of our Lady's entry into the world were assumed to be in all respects similar to those of St. John the Baptist's conception, following the account evolved out of the pious Christian imagination in the Protoevangel of St. James. It was not long, however, before these legendary elements receded into the background, and the feast became more and more centred on our Lady; and in the Naples of the ninth century it seems to have been almost exclusively of this nature. Such then we find it in the earliest English missal containing it. The prayers do indeed bear a relation to the apocryphal story just mentioned, but their stress is entirely on the intercessory powers of the child conceived.¹ It is, however, quite impossible to discover whether at this time the child was held to be untainted by any stain of original sin. This negative aspect of a very positive grace was perhaps never clearly formulated by the Greeks. They proclaimed in a hundred ways her great holiness and purity; they exhausted the Greek vocabulary for words expressing purity and stainlessness; they regarded her flesh as the pure virgin ground from which the second Adam was formed; she alone was at all times pleasing to God and at deadly enmity with the serpent; she was the mother of life and light, and therefore herself always in a state of life and light. All this was as good a positive declaration of Mary's sanctity and sinlessness as could be desired. It was natural that the negative aspect was not formulated so clearly, if only for the reason that original sin itself remained for so long—especially in the East—a doctrine not yet formulated. The Western Church, on the other hand, was during the same period mainly concerned to defend the universality of original sin, rather than to proclaim exceptions from that law.

And this was the opportunity of our own tiny mist-swept island, for, once we had introduced the feast, we felt it our duty to defend it. There is so much in our history that is materialistic and naturalistic that it is very gratifying to consider a period which, in the eyes of angels and saints, must have witnessed our greatest privileges and glories. God chooses men to do His work not according to their deserts, but according to the unsearchable decisions of His free election. And it will always be His glory and our privilege that we—such late arrivals and poor vessels of Christ—should have been chosen for this work. The West boasts three great

¹ *The Leofric Missal*, ed. F. E. Warren, Oxford (1883), p. 268.

Doctors, all at the beginning of the alphabet : Ambrose, Augustine, and Anselm. Ambrose, though leaving us no theology on the point, regards Mary's sanctity as unique after that of Christ. Augustine, though making no explicit reference to original sin, wishes that where Mary is concerned no mention of sin should be made. Anselm is much more helpful. His teaching on the essence of original sin and its manner of propagation, and his opening of the question of the relation between our Lady's purity of flesh and the immaculate flesh of her Son, set men's minds more than anything else on the theological dogma which we now so joyfully proclaim. Yet, although the erroneous attribution of certain of Eadmer's and other works to Anselm led to the belief throughout the Middle Ages that he had defended the Immaculate Conception, it is not possible to find anywhere in his genuine works an explicit statement of the dogma. On the contrary, some passages would seem to imply the opposite. But he never denies it. He defends at least a purification before birth, and attributes this to an anticipated application of Christ's merits. Further—what is more important—he adopts a theory of the transmission of original sin which did more than anything else to prepare the way for the truth. All sin, including original sin, is in the soul, and therefore could not depend for its transmission on some supposed taint inherent in the flesh. Moreover concupiscence was not the essence of original sin, since sin in the strict sense is in the higher part of the soul. All this—now universally accepted—was not at once assimilated into Western theology. And it was the lack of the clear ideas expounded by Anselm which delayed the evolution of the dogma in the minds of many until the time of Scotus.

But Anselm had a secretary, a Saxon monk by name Eadmer, who, like other Englishmen of his time, fervently loved the Mother of God and loved the new feast which was winning its way through England. Many supported the feast without admitting that our Lady was immaculate from the very first moment ; but Eadmer thought the exceptional position of Mary exalted enough to justify her sinlessness even at the time of conception. He does not appear to have made any public assertion of the doctrine during the lifetime of his master, St. Anselm, possibly because he did not wish to appear in any way to condemn Anselm's hesitation. It was thus a strange irony of fate that the work which he did eventually produce should have become associated with the name of Anselm during the whole of the Middle Ages, not being generally recognized as Eadmer's until the present century. The usual title of the work is *Tractatus de Conceptione Sanctae Mariae*; but in a Cambridge manuscript the late Fr. Thurston discovered a title which, through its similarity to the title with which Eadmer heads others of his works, furnishes a positive proof of its author. It reads : *De Conceptione Sanctae Mariae, Editum ab Eadmero, Magno Peccatore.* This manuscript is either the autograph of Eadmer himself, or a copy taken directly from the original.¹

¹ Cf. Thurston, H. (S.J.) et Slater, T. (S.J.), *Eadmeri Tractatus*, etc. Freiburg, 1904.

Eadmer argues both positively and negatively. Positively: all that we know of Mary and her great predestination demand that we should attribute this privilege to her; negatively: there is no sufficiently strong reason why we should deny it to her. The positive arguments weighed most with Eadmer, and they would have decided all Catholics in favour of the doctrine had they been immediately convinced that there was no valid reason against it. For several centuries, many Catholics, including some of the Church's greatest Doctors, thought that to assert the privilege would be to reject both the doctrine of original sin and that of the universal redemption of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not even the fact that the work of the secretary was handed down to the thirteenth-century theologians with all the authority of St. Anselm sufficed to overcome their scruples. This is why the work of Eadmer, all-important though it was as the first great theological defence of the truth, and complete and convincing though it was on its positive side, yet needed to be completed about three centuries later by John Duns Scotus. Soon after the great Franciscan, the majority of Christendom were to accept the doctrine with great enthusiasm, and the few who continued to support the authority of the leading mediaeval scholastics against it rapidly dwindled both in numbers and importance. The greater part of the work of defending the doctrine during the three centuries between Eadmer and Scotus was done—so far as historical evidence allows us to judge—in our own island, first of all mainly by the Benedictines, and later by the Franciscans.

Perhaps Eadmer's most powerful argument was taken from our Lady's predestination. Eternally her motherhood was foreordained by God. We must not think of God, after the manner of men, waiting for a worthy virgin to arise. Rather did the Holy Spirit from all eternity ordain that she should arise, and that she should be a fit dwelling-place for the Son of God Incarnate. No other of God's creatures was called to so high a dignity. It cannot be wrong in us, thought Eadmer, to ponder and venerate the coming of her who by the power of the Holy Ghost was to bring forth the Eternal Wisdom in the flesh. Could that Eternal Wisdom choose for Himself a stained and unworthy palace? Besides, we have only to consider God's way of acting in other less privileged creatures to realize what we must expect in His treatment of Mary. Did He not sanctify St. John the Baptist and Jeremias in the womb? And will not Mary's privilege be greater—infinitely greater—than theirs, just as her predestination was infinitely more sublime?

Further, did not Mary come that through the fruit of her womb the world might be saved from sin? She was chosen in God's ineffable mercy to come to the help of the world. Could she have been conceived bearing the burden of the sin brought into the world through the envy of the devil, whom she was sent to crush?

Again, was it not her flesh which would provide a body for the Word? And was it fitting that this flesh should be a flesh of sin? God could

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perform this miracle. He could not but wish it. Therefore He did it. Such was the original form in Eadmer of the famous argument, afterwards more tersely expressed by Scotus : *Potuit, decuit, ergo fecit.*

By such arguments Eadmer defended our Mother's sinlessness. But he was not unaware of the difficulties. How should he be, since neither the doctrine in its explicit form nor the feast could claim a universal or very ancient tradition ? That in itself constituted a difficulty. It was rendered greater by a popular form of Augustinianism which supposed that the sexual act was impossible without some sin on the part of the parents, and that it was precisely the sinfulness of this act which contaminated the flesh and led to the conception of the child in sin. St. Bernard later on was so convinced of this line of reasoning that he considered an immaculate conception impossible without virginal conception on the part of the mother. Eadmer, instead of rejecting the whole popular notion in favour of the Anselmian theory of transmission, is content to state that, if there was any sin involved in the act of generation, it would be in the parents, but not necessarily in the offspring. He still cannot see why it should be beyond the power of God to give grace to a child from the very first moment of its conception. In answer to the argument that Mary belonged to a sinful race, he has recourse to a homely example. If God can preserve the chestnut from all roughness and thorns, even though encased in a thorny outer covering, could He not do as much for Mary ? And what is there to prevent Him from wishing to do so ? He had chosen her for a mother, and why should He not make her worthy ? Was it right that she who was chosen to be the Queen of Angels should at any time have been less holy than angels—that she should ever have been in a state of sin ?

"Let those who feel otherwise," he concludes, "follow that doctrine which most commends itself to them. But I, most holy Lady, your little slave—for what I am worth—I know and believe and confess that you came forth all comely from the root of Jesse, free from any wound of sin which might mar that comeliness ; and, remaining all pure, you gave birth to an all-beautiful flower ; for the flower you brought forth is no ordinary flower, but one on which the sevenfold Holy Spirit rested, shedding over every creature the fullness of the grace of His divinity, the sweet aroma of everlasting life, and the odour of eternal salvation."¹

This work of Eadmer acquired a very great importance throughout the Middle Ages ; and, here in England at least, it seems to have been used as a text-book for several centuries.²

About this time, when the Normans had taken the important benefices, and all that had been especially fostered by the Saxons was deemed nationalist and anti-Norman, the festival of the Conception was in some parts sup-

¹ This work was edited by Fathers H. Thurston, S.J., and T. Slater, S.J., and published by Herder, 1904 : *Eadmeri Monachi Cantuaricensis Tractatus de Conceptione Sanctae Mariae.* It is in Migne, P. L., Vol. CLIX, pp. 302-18.

² Cf. Thurston-Slater, *op. cit.*, Introduction.

pressed by the invaders. Among its ardent English protagonists was Osbert, Prior of Westminster, in other respects a warm defender of the cause of the oppressed English. We have the letters which he wrote in defence of the feast, and a sermon on the same subject. Many of his arguments are so similar to those of Eadmer that we may surmise that he had been influenced by them. He stresses more than Eadmer the earliest of all principles of Marian theology, i.e. that Mary was the second Eve. Should she not then be as perfect as the first Eve? And if God could make Eve from the side of Adam without sin, why could He not do as much for His Mother?¹

Historical researches so far published have revealed very little positive evidence of any support given to the doctrine in this country during the next half-century. The feast, however, was quickly reintroduced, and even found its way to the Normans on the Continent. Evidently our Osberts pleaded well in Mary's favour. It was in France that the introduction of the feast aroused the attention of St. Bernard, who condemned it as novel, unsupported by scripture or tradition, and untheological. But he was ready to submit to a Roman decision in its favour, which he evidently did not regard as impossible. Doubtless it was his great authority which more than anything contributed to check the progress of the feast and dogma on the Continent. But England's insularity and her great love of Mary seem to have neutralized such hindrances. It is pleasing to learn from the annals of the Benedictine abbot of St. Albans that the Abbot Geoffrey in the beginning of the twelfth century caused the feast of the Conception to be kept with increased pomp; and there were similar developments in other Benedictine abbeys.

We find some quite casual references to the views of individual monks of St. Albans in several letters written by Nicholas, a monk of that abbey, to Peter of Celles. The original work or letter of Nicholas which provoked this particular correspondence has never yet been discovered.² Peter, then a Cistercian monk of St. Remigius, is at pains to correct his English friend in his ill-advised support of a doctrine which has no tradition behind it, and is but a product of the foggy English mentality.³ He is ready to be indulgent towards Nicholas. "For the island (England) is surrounded by water, and its inhabitants are naturally affected by the properties of this element, and they are frequently carried through their excessive fickleness into tenuous and subtle imaginings, comparing or even preferring their dreams to visions of the truth."⁴ Nicholas is by no means convinced. Many of the Church's beliefs about Mary are not based upon a clear tradition, but there is a presumption in their favour if they

¹ Cf. Williamson, E. W., *Letters of Osbert de Clare, Prior of Westminster*, Oxford, 1929. Also cf. Burridge, A. W., *L'Immaculée Conception dans la Théologie de l'Angleterre Médiévale*; *Rev. Hist. Eccl.* (1936), pp. 570 ff.

² But Edmund Bishop claims that this work does exist in the Bodleian. (MS. Bodl. Auct., D. 4, 18.) Cf. Bishop, *Liturgica Historica*, p. 259. I have had no opportunity to study this manuscript.

³ The whole Correspondence is in Migne, P. L., CCII, 613 seq.

⁴ L.c. 614.

follow from her position as Mother of God. Peter returns to the attack with the authority of St. Bernard, and a theory that Mary felt the temptations of the flesh before the Annunciation. This strange theory was based on a desire to give Mary merit from the struggle, but such an argument would prove too much, as we can well see if we apply it to the Son of God. Nicholas is able to counter the appeal to St. Bernard by quoting a story, already by his time widely accepted, of the appearance of St. Bernard to a Cistercian Abbot, retracting all that he had said against the Immaculate Conception and stating that he was expiating his fault in Purgatory. The other arguments were soon disposed of. After all, it was as easy to deny as to assert that Mary had ever suffered from irregular motions of the flesh, even if this had a necessary bearing on the argument. Moreover Mary endured sufferings and trials sufficient to ensure her merits and her crown. He concludes by an appeal to Bernard's own Marian principles, and to the classical passage of St. Augustine which even to this day is thought to favour the dogma.

Fifty years later, a curious anecdote related in Matthew Paris' *Chronica Majora* bears witness that the Benedictines of St. Albans are still as enthusiastic as ever. We are told that a certain Archbishop of Greater Armenia came to St. Albans to pay a pilgrimage to the tomb of the protomartyr.¹ As he was being entertained by the monks, they asked him many questions about the rite and religion of his country. Especially they asked him whether the Conception was celebrated in Armenia. He was able to satisfy them that three conceptions were there observed, that of Mary, that of St. John, and that of our Lord.

The glory of defending this privilege of the Virgin was to pass at the beginning of the thirteenth century to the English Franciscans. Tradition names the famous Bishop Grosseteste among its advocates, but none of his writings on the matter have been preserved. In the second half of the thirteenth century, we have the first great Franciscan defender whose writings on the subject have survived, William of Ware, master of Duns Scotus. William was closer to the Augustinian tradition than the writers previously considered. He assumed the view that the flesh handed down from the parents was unclean, and that through this the soul itself normally contracted original sin. But he put forward the theory that Mary's flesh was purified before the infusion of her soul, so that this could from the first moment inform it without contracting original sin. However, his answer to the other chief difficulty, that taken from Christ's universal redemption, was perfect. It consisted simply of an appeal to Anselm's general principle: "Quoniam matris munditia, per quam mundus est, non fuit nisi ab illo." The redemption merited for Mary complete preservation from the original sin which the rest of the race incur.²

¹ *Matthaei Parisiensis Chronica Majora*, London, 1640 (Rolls Series, 1876), p. 161.

² William of Ware's treatise has been published in the *Bibliotheca Franciscana Sebolaistica Medii Aevi*, Tom. iii, Quaracchi, 1904.

We come at last to the great Doctor of the Immaculate Conception, the disciple of William of Ware, John Duns Scotus. There is a difference of opinion about his nationality, but at any rate he learnt and taught mainly in the University of Oxford. So far as we know from the documents, it was chiefly at Oxford that he defended the doctrine. However, tradition has it that he was called on to defend the doctrine publicly in the University of Paris. There, we read in the Annals of Wadding, he was opposed by the Paris Doctors with no fewer than two hundred arguments. He listened to them calmly and peacefully, and repeated them all in their right order, solving their intricate difficulties and knotty syllogisms with as much ease as Samson broke the bonds of Delilah. Then he added many positive arguments, and so dumbfounded the learned University of Paris that they conferred on him the title of Subtle Doctor.¹

The story is at least well-founded. In his extant works,² he discusses the two main difficulties of reconciling the Immaculate Conception with the Redemption and Original Sin. In the case of the first, he converts a difficulty into a strong argument in favour of the doctrine. You object, he says in effect, that unless Mary had at one time been in a state of sin, she would not have been redeemed by Christ. The contrary is perhaps more true. Unless she had been completely preserved from sin she would not have been completely redeemed by Christ. This is true whether we regard the Redemption from the point of view of God's glory, or from the point of view of the evil from which we are redeemed, or from the point of view of the person redeemed. From God's point of view, it is more perfect that Christ should save a person from ever incurring the state of sin than that he should first be in sin and afterwards be purified. From the point of view of the evil, no greater evil has befallen mankind than the inheriting of the sin itself, for this is an incomparably greater evil than the loss of the beatific vision. Hence again, the most perfect redemption will redeem from the evil of sin. As for Mary, subject though she must be to the debt of sin, nothing greater could be done for her than actually to prevent her from contracting it.

The second difficulty (that the infected flesh of the parents, or their concupiscence, must infect the flesh of the offspring) Scotus meets by rejecting this material Augustinian conception, and by adopting the Anselmian view according to which original sin is essentially in the soul, essentially a loss of justice or grace, and in no way produced by an infection of the flesh. Original sin was the loss of a right, due to our incorporation with a progenitor who had lost that right, and a consequent state of disorder in the soul. If the baptized child can retain the state of grace together with its tainted flesh, why could not grace coexist with tainted flesh from the very first moment of the child's existence?

With Scotus the history of the dogma comes virtually to an end. Begun

¹ Cf. Waddingus, *Annales Minorum*, Quaracchi (1931-33), on the year 1304.
² All Scotus' writings on Our Lady have been published in one volume: Balić, C. (O.F.M.), *Theologiae Marianae Elementa*, Sibenik (1933).

in England, it was completed in England. At first the great champions were the Benedictines, at the end the Franciscans. However, what little evidence remains suggests that the Benedictines of the thirteenth century remained loyal to their first position. In the latter part of the century there was born a certain Richard of Bromwich, who may possibly have come from Castle Bromwich, not far from Oscott. In the opening years of the fourteenth century we find him a monk teaching theology at the Benedictine Abbey of Worcester. His works have not yet been published, but they are preserved in the Cathedral Library at Worcester, apparently in the handwriting of Richard himself.¹ He taught that the dogma was most probable, and his arguments are set forth almost in the identical words of William of Ware. The prerogatives of the Son are preserved, he says, for Mary's Son was conceived pure from pure flesh, whereas the Virgin was conceived pure from impure flesh, and all others are conceived impure from impure flesh. He reasons as follows: First he shows that this mystery is possible. Then he proves that it is fitting. Thirdly that it was actually so. Fourthly he answers a theological difficulty. And lastly he defends the feast. Richard of Bromwich is so little known that you will not find him mentioned in any dictionary, encyclopaedia or book of reference, whether Catholic or non-Catholic. Who knows what further similar evidence may yet be found? It is thought that he studied at Oxford, and took his degree there between 1303 and 1312.² Was he exceptional, or did Benedictines normally teach the same in their English monasteries?

During the three centuries which we have been considering, the defence of the Immaculate Conception—humanly speaking—must have seemed almost a point of English national honour. It is during the same time very difficult to find defenders outside England, although it remained a popular devotion encouraged by the Church. From the time of Scotus, however, the history of the doctrine is a history of triumphal progress. Soon after his death, the feast was made a day of obligation in England; 150 years later it became a privileged feast for the whole Latin Church. Universities and theologians in ever increasing numbers supported it, and finally came a long series of papal pronouncements culminating in the definition of the Dogma. Meanwhile a tragic betrayal lost England her ancient heritage. Even after the break with Rome, the Anglican Church still found room for many ardent defenders of the privileges of Mary. But with the centuries their numbers dwindled, and today even many Catholics have forgotten their past; and it is a significant token of this tragedy that the feast which was the glory of England and a holiday of obligation in this country while still a local and lesser feast abroad, is now a holiday of obligation in all other countries and only a day of devotion here. Is it wrong to hope that this may some day be changed?

H. F. DAVIS.

¹ Cf. MS. F. 139, Worcester Cathedral, fol. 181-2. In the Catalogue of MSS. at Worcester Cathedral, p. 73, is the evidence for the autograph.

² Cf. Little, A. G., and Pelster, *Oxford Theology and Theologians*, p. 240.

THE APPROACH TO CATHOLIC ACTION

THE coming of Catholic Action was certainly one of the greatest desires of the late Holy Father, and since he sent forth his stirring call to the laity everywhere to engage in the work of the apostolate not a little has been accomplished in many places. Schemes and programmes have been drawn up; secretariates for this, that, and the other have been formed; much literature has been put into circulation; prayer cards have been distributed; bureaux for social service have been established; vast crowds have been harangued from town hall platform and cinema stage. But, in spite of all this activity, one has certain misgivings, and if they are given expression in the lines which follow, it is in no spirit of criticism but simply in the hope that another point of view may appeal to some who feel out of sympathy with the line of approach to Catholic Action already adopted.

In the first place, then, there seems to be a common misunderstanding, especially among the laity, that Catholic Action is inseparably connected with the study circle. It has been said that it is impossible to play one's part in Catholic Action without a prolonged and detailed course of study, either of apologetics or social science. Consequently the idea has gained prominence that the ordinary humble work-a-day Catholic man or woman is not wanted in Catholic Action, that it is reserved for members of the more educated classes. The vast majority of poor people who live and love their Faith consider themselves excluded. Yet it is certain that the duty of sharing in Catholic Action is universal, but that not all the faithful are bound by this duty in the same way or degree. Therefore it would seem that a new method of approach is demanded by which the lay apostolate will be opened to all. As an example of what I mean, here is a verbatim quotation from a certain scheme of Catholic Action which lies before me at the moment. The title is "Practical Programme : Public Activities". Then it goes on :

We have in mind the following plans :

- (1) To bring eminent *writers* and *lecturers* from abroad ;
- (2) To have a page on Catholic Action in the official Catholic papers each month ;
- (3) To arrange for public *addresses* where desirable on matters of urgent or vital social importance ;
- (4) To arrange series of *lectures* on topics of a general interest . . . ;
- (5) To organize groups of Catholics who will *write* to the daily papers to engage in matters of controversy or for propaganda purposes ;
- (6) To organize in each parish groups of young people who will arrange the sale of all Catholic newspapers and of C.T.S. pamphlets . . . and thus build up a Catholic reading public ;
- (7) To *write pamphlets* for the C.T.S. on special topics.

In the above quotation certain words have been italicized in order the better to bring out its general trend. It is typical of the majority of programmes of Catholic Action. It has not been quoted that it might be criticized, for it was drawn up by people with an expert knowledge of the

circumstances in which it was to be applied. But in all humility, might one not ask: "Where is the apostolate in such a programme?" Catholic Action is essentially apostolate. Where there is no apostolate there is no Catholic Action. While we admit that all the above—lectures, writings, programmes, pamphlets, study-groups—are destined to prepare for the apostolate, experience would seem to show that in practice they do not usually result in definite organized apostolic activity. It is perhaps even true to say, amazing though it may appear, that study and discussion often *actually preclude* action! There is a type of mind developed by studying and talking which becomes paralysed in the face of the actual necessity for action.

Almost every priest will agree that it is unwarranted optimism to expect that if a large crowd of people is talked to and convinced of the necessity of doing something they will at once proceed to do it. Much the same thing applies when elaborate plans are set down on paper and broadcast to the people by Press or platform. It is the sad experience of many of the priest organizers of Catholic Action that the results of this method of approach are woefully disappointing. And here I think we have put our finger upon something quite vital for a right approach to the subject. Let us look at Civardi.¹ "Catholic Action is a mission for the glory of God and the salvation of souls," he says, "to help the Hierarchy in every event. . . . It must therefore desire precisely what the Hierarchy does, that is, what the Church does. Consequently, it has no other aim than this—the triumph of Christ's kingdom. It is essentially an apostolate. As assistant of the clergy it aims *above all* to help in promoting *the fulfilment of all religious duties*, especially within each parish. . . . It must be of service to the Parish Priest in *all that concerns parochial religious life*." In face of these quotations, the strange thing is that all over the world Catholic Action has undertaken practically everything except the pastoral work of the Church. It has organized study-groups, debates, addresses, it has published a vast amount of literature—it has done almost everything except what would appear to be its very heart and essence, the pastoral work of the Church. From its official definition we know that the essential idea of Catholic Action is the helping of the priest in his work. Within the limits of the powers and state of the laity, they lend themselves to the priest to be used by him in his own proper work. This work is in the main personal contact with souls, their pursuit and development. Of course, a priest may pour his energies into other accidental avenues—some of us are commanded to do so—but these are not his essential work. And thus the inevitable conclusion emerges, that Catholic Action in its truest form is the sharing by the laity in the pastoral work of the clergy.

And yet Civardi says that "cultural propaganda, or a wider dissemination of ideas, *must precede* every other activity",² and he proves his contention by arguing from the psychological principle that the will follows the

¹ *A Manual of Catholic Action*, pp. 6, 7, 8, 19.

² *Op. cit.* p. 21.

understanding. We agree—but the precise difficulty is in the question as to what intellectual formation is necessary before one may take part in the lay apostolate. Compare the quotation from Civardi with this from the speech of Pius XI to the Directors of Catholic Action in Rome in 1931: "Catholic Action must consist of two things—it must fall into two parts, *not necessarily successive ones*: two divisions, ideal and moral . . . the work of formation first of all; the formation of intelligence, of will, of thoughts, of sentiments, of active initiative, of truthfulness and of sanctity. Catholic Action must have as its preliminary the individual sanctification of each of its members so that the supernatural life abounds and superabounds within them. But after the first element of formation comes the second: the distribution of this life, the action of the apostolate." Here the Pope makes it abundantly plain that the work of formation and the work of apostolate may go on together.

One of the words italicized in the programme cited earlier is *abroad*. There is a feeling in some quarters that there is too much "Continentalism" about Catholic Action, and it is a pity and quite unnecessary that such an impression should have been given. After all, each country has certain national characteristics in its Catholic life, and it would seem quite natural and quite logical that Catholic Action should, as far as possible, be integrated into a country's already existing Catholic life. In many places, for example, it appears to be true that if people go to church they get the services of the Church, but if they do not, nobody goes after them. There is no house-to-house visitation as such. But in England we have a magnificent tradition of visiting clergy. It is the finest thing in our Catholic inheritance; it must be preserved at all costs. "A visiting priest makes a church-going people" has always been the slogan of the secular clergy of England, or, as a north-country prelate used to remark, we have eight sacraments in England, and the eighth is the sacrament of the door-knocker. Should not therefore the apostolate of the laity in England follow the traditional lines of the apostolate of the clergy? If Catholic Action is the sharing of the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy, why try to force it along new channels? When our methods in the past have been eminently successful, why not continue to apply them and extend them to new fields? It may be retorted that our methods in the past have not been eminently successful, witness the leakage, witness the mixed marriages. But the fact remains, and there are figures to prove it, that where the clergy have systematically and conscientiously carried out the house-to-house visitation of the people, the spiritual level of the people has been remarkably high, and where the clergy have failed in that duty the level has been low. Of course, visitation must be supplemented by other means of the apostolate, such as the formation of special organizations for youth and the bringing together of the young people of both sexes in order to prevent mixed marriages. But the main characteristic of the apostolate of the English clergy has always been the pastoral visitation of the people, and it will be a

sad day for England when that begins to disappear. No doubt Catholic Action abroad has many things to teach us, but it does not seem necessary that a violent wrench should be made and that those responsible for Catholic Action should try to direct it along lines for which the national character may not be suited. Without being insular, it can be rightly contended that we in England have a well-defined Catholic life with certain fixed habits and a fixed outlook. Much of the opposition to Catholic Action—not in itself, but as it has been organized in this country—has arisen from precisely this, that those charged with such organization have never considered seriously that it is possible to mould Catholic Action into the framework of our life as it already exists, but have immediately sought their model for Catholic Action abroad. Thus, to become really concrete, one might suggest that Catholic Action should embrace such works as the visitation of hospitals, work for the most wretched and dejected of the population (which will entail the visitation of common lodging-houses, hostels, gaols, casual wards), visitation of the homes of Catholics and of non-Catholics with a view to bringing about conversions, the making of the parish census, and so on. That is pastoral Catholic Action: it is a real apostolate.

Two questions at once arise: Are the laity capable of undertaking such work? And what degree of intellectual formation or study is required for it? With regard to the first question one might quote the words of Pius XI (*A.A.S.*, Vol. XX, p. 296): "Would that [the laity] might be convinced that they are called and chosen by an altogether special grace of God for this office which is not too far removed from the priestly office; for Catholic Action is nothing else but the Apostleship of the Faithful who, under the leadership of the Bishops, lend a helping hand to the Church and in a measure complete its *pastoral ministry*." Or the following incident related by Abbot Chautard of Pius X: "Happening to be one day amidst a group of Cardinals, the Holy Father said to them: 'What is the thing most necessary at the present time to save society?' 'Build Catholic schools,' said one. 'No.' 'Multiply churches,' replied another. 'No again.' 'Increase the recruiting of the clergy,' said a third. 'No, no,' replied the Pope. 'What is most necessary at the present time is to have in each parish a group of laymen at the same time virtuous, enlightened, determined and really apostolic.'" Then Chautard himself continues: "This holy Pope, at the end of his life, counted for the salvation of the world on the training, by the zeal of the clergy, of Catholics devoting themselves to the apostolate by word and action, but, above all, by example. . . . He considered that in any class whatever chosen ones could be formed. And so he classified his priests according to the results which their zeal and their abilities had obtained on this point."¹ But if a further answer to our question is needed, may we not point to the excellent work of this kind already being performed by the lay visitors of the Legion of Mary and the Society of St. Vincent

¹ *The Soul of the Apostolate*, p. 151.

de Paul? Experience and the study of the reports of these societies show that not only can the laity undertake this work, but that they can very often succeed where the priest has failed.

Before turning to the answer to the second of our questions the way for it might be prepared by allaying one or two misgivings which possibly have arisen in the mind of the reader already. Some, for example, may feel that visitation of homes by the laity would be resented. That is contrary to experience. If the work is being undertaken in a truly apostolic spirit, with due humility and under authoritative direction by the priest, it is hard to see how it can legitimately be resented. It has been the experience of several priests that those who objected to the visitation made by the laity were only those who objected to their own visitation also. Coldness towards such visitation is usually a sign of religious indifference or worse. Again it may be suggested that a priest visits his district four or five times a year, and this is sufficient without the interference of the laity. Yet did not St. Charles Borromeo say that one soul was diocese enough for a Bishop? And if visitation by the priest is so necessary, can it be urged that some at least of the benefits attaching to it will not also be gained by lay visitation under his direction and in all things obedient to him? Most priests feel that visitation four or five times a year, however fruitful, is not sufficient safeguard against the terrible difficulties of modern civilization. Even in the very best of our parishes it is surely possible to improve the number of frequent communicants by means of a canvass for the daily Mass Crusade made by the laity; it is surely possible to increase the membership of the confraternities by a house-to-house visitation. Certainly it can never be said that visitation by the laity will effect no good at all.

But perhaps the deepest seated objection against this pastoral lay apostolate is that the clergy fear indiscretions on the part of the laity. Might not one just as logically refuse a harvest because some ears may be spoiled by clumsy handling? The harvest at stake is souls: souls poor and feeble, blind and lame: in such need, in such numbers that there is a danger that one may regard the situation as irremediable. Yet it is for such that Our Lord bids the search to be made in the streets and lanes and highways and hedges so that His house may be filled. A harvesting so vast can only be wrought in one way, and that is by marshalling the battalions of the laity. Yes, some indiscretions may ensue. In some measure they are inseparable from zeal and life. Now there are two ways of ensuring against indiscretions: a shameful inaction or a careful discipline. The priest whose heart echoes that yearning of Our Lord for the sick multitude will turn with horror from the former alternative and throw himself with all his might into the harvesting of stricken souls. It is not amiss to recall the words of Newman: "They who are ever taking aim, make no hits; they who never venture, never gain; to be ever safe is to be ever feeble; and to do some substantial good is the compensation for much incidental imper-

fection." Nor ought we to forget that the lay apostolate is a work of grace; and to ignore the existence of grace is simply worldly prudence. It is easy to quote objections and possibilities of harm, but they who do so should give a thought also to the helps. This is a supernatural work and the rules that govern it are not merely human rules but the rules of God.

Yet another objection has come to one's ears from a fellow priest. "I refuse to allow the laity to do my work for me," he says; "only lazy priests would allow such a thing!" The answer is obvious. The priest is always the priest and his work is always there. There is no question of the laity doing it for him or instead of him; it is merely that they assist him and multiply his presence throughout the parish. Recently a priest wrote the following of the lay apostles who were under his direction: "Not the least value of my organized lay apostolate to me in these dark days of war is the inspiration it gives me to carry on. When all seems so black that one feels that trying further is almost useless; and when one is tempted to leave the 'hopeless cases' to themselves, the thought that while I am seated at my fire my layfolk, two by two, in the slush and the darkness of the black-out, are on their errands of mercy, shoots me out of my chair along the streets of the parish. To see those layfolk, all smiles and full of cheerfulness, at the meeting after a night of fierce bombing is a great consolation, and a living reminder that I must never lose heart."

And so we come to answer our second question as to the degree of intellectual formation required before one may undertake apostolic work. Some have argued that such formation must be profound, and that no work should be done until such training has been given. That view would appear to be negatived by the words of Pius XI already quoted in which he says clearly and explicitly that the two parts of Catholic Action—formation and apostolate—are not necessarily successive. I should not like to be misunderstood. It is not contended for one minute that a well-instructed and enlightened laity is not a desirable thing; it is not contended that the work so far done in this direction in the name of Catholic Action has been useless. But it is suggested that the issue has in no small way been confused by continual insistence upon study, the Press, literature, the platform, the public address. It is simply a question of emphasis. Catholic Action has been compared to an army, and an army is made up largely of private soldiers. If they were excluded, where would your army be? Of course, there must be officers and specialists in every army, and not least in the army of Catholic Action. The Church today has a great need of experts from among the laity on Apologetics, Sacred Scripture, History and Social Science, but these will always remain the minority. It is simply crying out for the moon to hope ever to make the majority seriously undertake prolonged courses of study. Must they, then, be excluded from Catholic Action? Or must they be given the paltry, scarcely apostolic works to accomplish? Might it not be suggested that the degree of education required before one may engage in the apostolate has been very much

exaggerated? Every Catholic layman who lives and loves his Faith has within himself a picture of that Faith, and it requires but little training to put that picture into such definite shape that it can be passed on to others. There is here a vast potentiality that has not yet been sufficiently explored. There has been too much of the big drum about our pronouncements on Catholic Action when by the quiet preparation and patient creation of apostolic machinery, by the development of the spiritual life and disciplined action among chosen bodies of the laity, a thousand per cent more would have been achieved by way of contribution to the extension of the kingdom of Christ.

To make the matter utterly practical, a rather striking example may be quoted. In two neighbouring parishes campaigns were being conducted for the sanctification of the home. In the first parish it was announced one Sunday from the pulpit that a large number of prayer cards had been secured and were obtainable at the church door. A few Sundays later the same course was adopted with regard to pictures for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart, and the congregation was told that if any person wanted to have his home consecrated the clergy should be notified. A month passed. Then the parish priest produced in the pulpit a leaflet encouraging the practice of daily Mass for peace, and said the same would be distributed on leaving the church. Those who wished to take part were to sign the leaflet and hand it in to the clergy. The results were most disappointing. During the course of their visiting the priests noticed the prayer cards flung away in a corner of the house, remaining there week after week. Less than a dozen requests for the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart were received and precisely two of the Mass leaflets. In the second parish a different method was adopted. The priest had around him a group of some twenty trained layfolk, men and women. Systematically they visited every home in the parish and, where they could, extracted a promise that family prayers would in future be said in common. If this promise was not forthcoming no card was left. This first canvass was followed by a second, "reminding" the people of their promise and also suggesting the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart. Upwards of a hundred families asked for the priest to call to perform the ceremony. When this second canvass was concluded a third visit was made, and this time the practice of daily Mass was urged, and a signed promise was given by several hundreds of those visited to offer Holy Mass for peace at least once per week. The increase in the attendance at daily Mass was the proof of the success of this apostolate. Such examples could be multiplied, and they would all serve to prove that it ought to be a fundamental principle of Catholic Action that everything undertaken should have for its purpose the effecting of considerable and definite good. Great good must be done to the great number, if possible; if not, then great good to a smaller number; *never a little good to a great number.*

Before passing on to say a word about the spirit in which this apostolic

work should be undertaken we might pause to consider another feature of Catholic Action which has possibly been overstressed, with the result that many of the clergy have been antagonized. It is that Catholic Action is a LAY apostolate, with the "lay" spelt in aggressive capitals. The term "Ecclesiastical Assistant" has a sound of subordination about it which naturally does not appeal to the average priest. For example, the following quotation taken verbatim (except for the italics) from an official memorandum drawn up by an approved Secretariate of Catholic Action would be sufficient to prejudice the whole movement in the eyes of most priests. "The official title of the Priest assisting a local or a diocesan or a national Catholic Action Body is that of *Ecclesiastical Assistant*. It will be noted that the term is not *Chaplain* or *Spiritual Director*. It has been laid down (*sic!*) overseas that, generally speaking, executive authority should not reside in the priest. It is obvious that no matter of great importance should be undertaken without his advice and co-operation. He will be in constant touch with the movement and will advise his laymen of all general lines of policy, but *the ultimate decisions on the methods to carry out the programme should be taken by the laity themselves.*" Possibly all this is legally correct, but it might be suggested that a method of approach more palatable to the clergy could be found. For example, it could have been insisted that the priest must always be the "soul" of Catholic Action. In practice the idea of clerical as opposed to lay ought scarcely to enter the minds of Catholic Actionists. The whole thing ought to be built up around the pastoral clergy, be essentially diocesan and parochial in character, and be regarded primarily as the handmaid of the clergy. The Bishop, with the clergy in organic and juridical union with him, uses the laity in his own apostolate. It is not as if the laity had their own apostolate in which they are assisted by the priest. That impression might easily be given by the document quoted above, and it is false. It is the priest who uses Catholic Action to assist him in his own proper work. Thus there seems to be some ground for the view that the title of *Assistant* is, in English at least, most unsuitable and liable to be misunderstood. Many still prefer to regard the priest as the *Director* of Catholic Action and, they ask, how can he be less, seeing that he uses Catholic Action in his own priestly work? This is not for a moment to say that the lay apostles are merely passive: they are active instruments in the controlling hand of the priest. The latter may not act as president of his Catholic Action organization, nor as any other officer, but the implication that he should allow the laity to take all decisions on the carrying out of the programme seems to be too exclusive altogether. Surely this is the duty of the whole assembly, *including the priest?* The ideal thing seems to be to link up priest and people into the closest unity, into an army in which the priests are the officers and the laity the non-commissioned officers and private soldiers.

But we are concerned not so much with technicalities as with a manner of approach. So much has been said and written on the technical position

of the priest in Catholic Action that two definite results have been secured: the clergy have been antagonized and everybody has been bewildered. Some writers seem to delight in finding paradoxes which at first sight seem to be clever, but on closer examination prove to mean precisely nothing. Even Civardi appears to find himself in difficulties when he tries to explain how the priest "possesses an authority of a superior order" but still "has no direct authority to deliberate or to dispose".¹ Of course, it is well to insist that Catholic Action is a lay apostolate, but it is bad psychology to try to impress upon the clergy who usually have the task of initiating Catholic Action that when it is in operation they will have no direct power to deliberate or dispose, that they will be merely *assistants*, that only on matters of *great* importance are the laity obliged to seek their advice and co-operation. It does not come within the scope of this paper to discuss the position of the priest as the formative influence in the Catholic Action body, but that is a glorious and much neglected work. In this respect his position rather resembles that of the Novice Master in a religious Order. He must choose carefully and train diligently. His work is to form his chosen band in Christian perfection. Like his Master, the priest's pastoral method is twofold. There is the ordinary preaching to and visitation of the people and the administration of the Sacraments. But besides this there is another no less necessary—that of fostering and developing the divine life in those who seek to go higher. Christ's work would have been a failure had He not trained the twelve. The priest's work also will collapse unless he forms around him an apostolic band.

And now a word about the spirit in which this pastoral apostolate must be undertaken by the laity. In the first place it must have both as its object and its means of action personal sanctification. That is all-important. Then a definite system involving a weekly meeting should be drawn up. The purpose of the meeting should be twofold—spiritual formation and apostolate. Thus it should include a wealth of prayer, some spiritual reading and a talk by the priest on the formative side, and, on the apostolic side, each member should give a report on work accomplished since the last meeting and should then be allotted definite work to be done and reported on at the next. Visitation is better done in pairs. As regards the spirit in which the actual work duty is performed, above all else it should be humble. The method used should be that of establishing a real, deep and genuine friendship with those visited. The service given should be generous, heroic, unbounded and persevering, and rooted in true Christian charity so that the Master is seen in all those who are served. Anything savouring of officialdom would be disastrous. The apostolate should be directed to the individual soul, and it will be found that there will be little failure for the persevering apostle who has simple and courageous faith under all circumstances and is unfailingly gentle and sympathetic, willing to listen and to enter wholeheartedly into the case as put before him. For

¹Op. cit. pp. 164-6.

the lay apostle there is only one method of approach, only one way of doing God's work, and that is the way of gentleness and sweetness. Add to that relentless persistence and a heart for the impossible and your apostle is well-nigh irresistible.

Finally—a plea. Cardinal Wiseman once wrote: "Take away Our Blessed Lady's contribution to the Gospel testimony, efface her testimony to Christianity, and you find not simply a link broken, but the very fastening of the whole chain wanting; not merely a gap or a break, made in the structure, but the foundation gone." So it is with Catholic Action. It is the continuation of the Redemption upon earth, a perpetuation of the Incarnation. Just as Mary, by the will of God, took such an intimate, such a vital part in the work of our Redemption, so does she still, by her universal mediation, take an essential part in the continuation of that work by the Mystical Body of Christ upon earth. Whether we advert to it or not, every grace of Catholic Action is bestowed through Mary; every soul that is led to God is led by Mary; no new stronghold of the kingdom of Christ is established without the active co-operation of Mary. All the work of the Hierarchy is accomplished with the help of graces bestowed through Mary; and Catholic Action, the sharing by the laity in that work of the Hierarchy, is also made fruitful by means of graces bestowed through Mary. And thus our plea is for a greater recognition of the part Mary must play in Catholic Action. Let us model it upon what must be its pattern, the work of Redemption itself. That work was only begun, accomplished and consummated through and with Mary. So should it be with Catholic Action—a pastoral apostolate, directed to the individual soul and working in all things in the closest union with and dependence upon the holy Mother of God.

FRANCIS J. RIPLEY.

GERMAN REFUGEES—THE SPIRITUAL PROBLEM

WHEN refugees from Germany and Austria first began to come to this country the problem of their spiritual welfare was a comparatively simple one. As they were almost all merely passing through England, granted visas solely on condition that they emigrated further, their spiritual needs, as distinct from those of our own people, were practically restricted to opportunities of confession in German. They still lived very much in the atmosphere of the country they had left, spoke and thought in their own language, and had had no time to adopt English customs. Now, however, when emigration is practically impossible and all the refugees have lived in England for at least two years, an entirely different situation has arisen, and presents quite peculiar problems for the clergy in whose parishes they are residing.

Statistics are not easy to obtain in view of the fact that quite a number of refugees are not known to any committee. Others omit to give changes of address, and some are unwilling to indicate their religious allegiance. If we include children¹ we may perhaps estimate the number of German and Austrian Catholic refugees in Great Britain today at about 3000. This is not a large number, but in view of the value of each individual soul before God, and the unique situation of the refugees, the problem cannot be regarded as unimportant.

Language is perhaps the most important aspect of it. The majority of the refugees now speak at least intelligible English, and it is obviously desirable that they should be encouraged to speak at all times the language of the country in which they are residing, especially in view of the fact that we are at war with the country where they learned their mother tongue. Nevertheless, we have to recognize the fact that the most capable linguist generally prefers to pray in his own language, and we do well to keep in mind the great respect which the Church has always had for the use of the vernacular in her services. Happily, Catholics have a common bond in the Mass and can find everywhere in the world the same sacrifice, where language—in any case a widely known one—is far less important than the supreme act which it adorns; the vernacular sermon does not occupy the same place as it does in a Protestant—and especially a German Protestant—service. Moreover, an English sermon, delivered in simple language, at a speed which befits pulpit utterance, can easily be understood by all except a very small minority. But where circumstances permit and where there is a sufficiently large number of refugees to warrant it an occasional sermon in German is greatly appreciated. In regard to confession, every effort should be made to put them in touch with a German-speaking priest, and where this is impossible it is generally advisable to explain that God does

¹ The spiritual welfare of child refugees is not touched on here, because through the efforts of the Catholic Committee they are mainly placed in Catholic institutions and families. They also accommodate themselves more easily to English ways.

not demand the impossible and that they need have no anxiety about the validity of the absolution even if they express themselves badly.

All this is very easy with the good and fervent Catholics. The graver difficulty arises with the lapsed and the wayward, and here mastery of the German language is by no means an adequate or a certain means of winning their confidence. Indeed a German or an Austrian priest may have more difficulty than an Englishman, because he belongs to the world from which they have come but not to that in which they have to spend the rest of their lives. Uprooted as they are from the past, rightly determined to plan wisely for the future, they do not respond as they once did to a person who speaks their own language. It does not mean the same to them, it is no longer part of their lives, and, to a large extent, they no longer think in it. Yet they are not quite at home in English; it does not recall to them the spiritual background in which they were trained. Spiritually they are wanderers between two worlds. Certainly the difficulty can be overcome, and we may rely absolutely upon God's grace to supply what human language fails to provide, but humanly speaking infinite patience is demanded on the part of the confessor or spiritual adviser.

The root of the language difficulty is really insecurity. When a man decides calmly to leave his own country and settle down elsewhere to his own greater advantage he not only takes care to learn a new language but makes himself thoroughly at home in it. He exchanges one security for another. It is quite otherwise with the refugee. Even if he has not been compelled to emigrate, he has at any rate chosen to do so only under pressure of much greater evils and after first losing all sense of security in his own country (a refugee is defined as one who no longer enjoys the protection of the State of which he is a subject). Often enough he has been deprived of all his goods and of his liberty, and may have seen his nearest friends and relatives even deprived of their lives. He has perhaps come near to death himself in the tortures of the concentration camp. Insecurity was his lot at home and he chooses a lesser but still real insecurity abroad.

However fortunate he may be here, even if he finds (as many are finding under war conditions) work and regular remuneration, he is still insecure. After his experiences at home he tends, even against his better judgement, to be distrustful, and he knows that, at best, his lot cannot be better than that of the Englishman. If there is unemployment after the war he will be the first to lose his post. He has more anxiety at the present time about the outcome of the war because a German victory would imply so much worse a fate for him than for us, and he generally has relatives in enemy territory exposed to the dangers of war and perhaps actively fighting for an evil cause under the orders of generals who are completely ruthless about human lives and suffering. All these things occupy his mind, to the exclusion often of spiritual considerations, and rob him of that measure of security which a man generally needs if he is to concentrate on the salvation of his soul.

The pastor of souls endeavouring to assist the refugee must keep these special considerations constantly in mind. He must also recall certain more general aspects of the problem.

There are roughly two classes of refugees, the racial and the political, of which the first is by far the more numerous. It would not be unjust to say that the political refugees who are in England are men of little importance in their own country, having no prospects of playing a leading role in the reconstruction of Germany. The Austrians who opposed Hitler had practically no chance of escaping, but had to face death or torture in the concentration camps. The Germans had better opportunities, but the most distinguished of them have already gone to the U.S.A. The political refugees who remain have generally a long tradition of hostility to the Catholic Church, they are mainly "left-wing" in politics and not a few were opponents of such Catholic leaders as Dollfuss and Schuschnigg before they became Hitler's enemies. Some of these may come back to the Church of their fathers when they realize that in England they are in the presence of a Catholic tradition which has been maintained against a different background and which has been lifted far above all political tendencies. They present a unique if happily rare problem for the priest. He must make allowances for their very natural tendency to hold the Church responsible for the mistakes of Catholic politicians and must look even further back to a time when Church and State were identified in a manner which we have never known in England.

Many of the victims of racial persecution were also attached to political parties and feel themselves to be political refugees, but the essential reason for their entry into this country was that they were compelled by economic pressure or worse to leave their homeland where they were regarded as Jews. "Jew", of course, for Hitler means one who belongs to a particular race and implies no direct reference to religious allegiance. Hence many of those who were persecuted on this score were good and fervent Catholics, converts themselves or children of mixed marriages. Even so their numbers appear to be disproportionately large, but this is due to the fact that marriages between Jews and Christians were very frequent in some parts of Central Europe and that the proportion of Jews was much higher than in our own country.

Here again the problem is one of dealing with the wayward. The sincere convert, honestly striving to fulfil the obligations of his religion in a strange land and in a language with which he is not familiar, will find his way to the priest and be very ready to accept his advice. But there are not a few among them who became Christians for reasons of expediency, sometimes in the hope of emigrating more easily. Catholic priests were always stricter than others about receiving such converts, but even they, partly moved by human feeling, occasionally neglected to inquire very closely into the motives of conversion or received them after very hasty instruction. Expelled from the country where they discovered the Faith,

and thrust into new surroundings, where a Catholic church is often hard to find, it is not surprising that some of these easily drift away.

Jews are generally to be found in the towns—a fact due to historical circumstances, constant wandering and limited professional opportunities—and hence these refugees of Jewish origin have been affected deeply by the outlook of the great city and the vices of modern industrialism. The evils of our own industrial centres are grave enough, but the continental *Grossstadt* has an even worse influence on the faith and morals of some of its inhabitants. There is probably more hatred of religion in Floridsdorf and Ottakring in Catholic Vienna than in the East End of London. There is not indeed much hostility to Catholicism amongst the refugees, but the influence of the *Grossstadt* must be allowed for. Having already ceased to practise in a Catholic country or in an overwhelmingly Catholic district, they are not likely to return readily to the observance of their religion in England.

Here we touch on another factor governing the mental attitude of the refugee, which it is not easy for Catholics in this country to understand. Apart from such cities as Berlin, the Catholics of Germany are predominant in particular districts and not distributed more or less evenly throughout the country as they are here. Not having had to maintain their Faith in the midst of those who disagree with it, they are less earnest in their practice. In particular they regard the obligation of Sunday Mass less seriously and they do not always appreciate the significance of assisting at non-Catholic religious worship. They have not previously been reminded constantly of the sinfulness of *communicatio in sacris*, because the danger of this is so rare in Catholic surroundings. It is thus difficult for them to refuse to accept invitations from well-meaning English people to attend their churches, especially if a service is provided closely resembling that to which they are accustomed. In entirely Catholic districts Sunday Mass is apt to be viewed more as a custom than an obligation, with the result that even the most intelligent are often reluctant to believe that deliberate non-attendance is a mortal sin.¹ They have to be reminded of their obligations, but the priest will do well to bear in mind this different outlook and judge them by other standards than his English charges. Perhaps the most effective means of bringing them back to a sense of their full responsibility is for both clergy and laity to display as much interest in the welfare of the refugees as that which non-Catholics have shown and continue to show.

A great deal has already been done for the welfare of Catholic refugees. The Christian Council for Refugees from Central Europe, which is the principal fund-raising and distributing body on the Christian side of the

¹ One well-educated refugee, otherwise not ignorant of Catholic theology, endeavoured to maintain a triple distinction between *lässliche*, *schwere*, and *Tod-Sünden*, the first being venial faults, the second sins which must be confessed but would not lead to Hell, the third being those sins which deserve Hell. Non-attendance at Mass, he considered, belonged to the second class.

work, has Cardinal Hinsley as one of its presidents and four Catholic members on its board of management. Lately it arranged for communications to be sent to all the parish priests of places where Catholic refugees were residing, giving their addresses and sending a letter simultaneously to the refugees, informing them of the necessity of making themselves known to the priest and assuring them of the Council's interest in their welfare. Altogether 443 parish priests were thus approached, of whom 100 were in London, and the response has been most encouraging. Frequent changes of address led to many inaccuracies, which, however, were often cleared up through the investigations of the priest on the spot. The parochial clergy must obviously assume more of the tasks of spiritual oversight as the refugees become more widely distributed and more absorbed in the life of this country, and that is the main reason for this article; but there is still a certain amount of oversight exercised from the centre, again under the auspices of the Christian Council, which is much appreciated by the refugees. In particular a monthly letter is published in German, giving information of interest both to Catholics and Protestants, with a spiritual message by the writer of the present article. Protestants receive a similar message from a German refugee pastor. The present writer also makes his contribution to the administrative side of the work by acting as assistant secretary to the Germany Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends, which is responsible for a very large proportion of the case-work for adult Christian refugees of all denominations from Germany and Austria.

The following list, recently compiled by the records department of the Christian Council, gives some idea of the distribution of the adult Catholic refugees whose names have been made known to that organization :

					MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
London	..	..	..	..	250	520	770
Country	..	..	..	..	260	430	690
Total	..	..	..	..	510	950	1460
Interned :							
England	..	..	..	..	100	65	165
Overseas	..	..	..	..	80	—	80
Total	..	..	..	..	180	65	245
Forces :							
Pioneer Corps or A.T.S.	..	..	..	..	50	3	53
Address unknown	..	..	..	..	85	190	275
Total	..	..	..	..	825	1208	2033

The number of child refugees (mainly under 18) known to the Catholic Committee's sub-committee for children is 320.

EDWARD QUINN.

HOMILETICS

The First Sunday of the New Year

(The Holy Name of Jesus)

His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. (Gospel: Luke ii, 21.)

THERE is something singularly appropriate in the arrangement made by Pope Pius X of saintly memory by which the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus is celebrated on the Sunday between the Feasts of the Circumcision and the Epiphany, that is, on the first Sunday ordinarily of our civil year. A liturgical reason is doubtless to be found in the consideration that it was on the occasion of the Circumcision—the eighth day after His birth—that His name was called Jesus, and there is an obvious fitness in celebrating the two Feasts in close conjunction. But even more impressive to the ordinary mind is the fact, although not a liturgical one, that, as a result of Pope Pius' arrangement, the celebration takes place on the first Sunday of our New Year, and that, as a consequence, the Holy Name may be regarded as prominently displayed on the arch over the entrance of the year and as proclaiming to us, as we enter beneath the arch, a sweet and inspiring message of benediction, protection, and love.

In the Epistle of the Mass the words of St. Peter give the key-note of the celebration. St. Peter had performed a striking miracle in the Name of Jesus, by which a poor cripple of over forty years of age, who had been lame from his mother's womb, was completely cured. Peter was, as a consequence of the miracle and his preaching, immediately arrested, with St. John, and on the next day he had to appear before the Sanhedrin and answer the challenge: "By what power, or by what name, have you done this?" Peter's answer was direct, fearless, and spirited, and he spoke as filled with the Holy Ghost. He ascribed the cure to the power of Our Lord's Name and proclaimed with a sweep of universal vision, "there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved".

The power of His Holy Name is, of course, the power of Jesus Himself "By the Name of Our Lord Jesus of Nazareth," spoke St. Peter, "even by Him this man standeth here before you whole." We can associate therefore with the Name of Jesus all the illimitable benefits which Christ Himself has conferred on us—our Redemption on Calvary, and the wonderful dispensation by which the Redemption is borne in copious flood of grace to our souls. But if we may venture to distinguish the Name of Jesus from Jesus Himself—to distinguish but not to separate—we find in the Name a wondrous attractiveness, a concentration of the ineffable associations of Jesus Himself. The Name is in itself a message, a gospel, of Jesus. It sums up His human life. It bears glad tidings of great joy to the minds

and senses of all who hear it and receive it. In the words of St. Bernard, "it shall be in thy ear joy, in thy mouth honey, in thy heart melody". And in the translation from St. Bernard we can joyfully hymn :

No voice can sing, no heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Jesus' name,
The Saviour of mankind.

As we enter, then, the New Year under the aegis of the Holy Name of Jesus our hearts should truly rejoice and be glad. The Holy Name, surmounting the arch of the year, should be to us a veritable *sursum corda*. It is a Name of majesty and power, the Name assigned by God the Father to His Incarnate Son. It recalls the love, the mercy, the tenderness, the infinite goodness of God to men, and it is a speaking manifestation of the ineffable living attractiveness and of the adorable perfections of the Incarnate God. Indeed, we may truly say that the sermon of today consists of one word, Jesus, and that the prayer of today is one word, Jesus. And if we are to formulate or adopt an aspiration to be frequently on our lips in the course of this New Year we cannot do better than adopt that which was familiar in the Catholic past : "Jesus be to me a Jesus!"

The First Sunday after the Epiphany

(*The Holy Family*)

He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them.
(Gospel : Luke ii, 51.)

It was with true insight into the needs of modern times that Pope Benedict XV extended the Feast of the Holy Family throughout the entire Church. The assaults on family life are everywhere manifest, and society itself tends to disrupt and collapse because the essential and fundamental unit of society, namely the family, is being destroyed through deplorable and widespread failure to observe its essential laws. The wise Pontiff could not convey a more salutary lesson to his people throughout the world than by directing attention, through a universal Feast of the Church, to the supreme ideal of family life, realized to perfection, in the humble home of Nazareth.

The first consideration which might well present itself, as we contemplate the life at Nazareth, is the fact, in itself truly astounding, that Our Lord devoted thirty of His thirty-three years of life on earth, not to the active apostolate, not to the display of divine and miraculous power, but to a humble life in a poor family, to continued subjection and obedience to parental rule, and to the ordinary labour and preoccupations of a home

whose head was a carpenter. Human standards of judgement fail us here. Left to ourselves, we should never conceive that thirty years of Our Lord's life would be given to a hidden life in a humble family and only three to the all-important ministry of the Word. And yet, in the disposition of divine Wisdom, such was the division and proportion of His supremely precious years of life. Our Lord Himself, in reference to an incident of His Last Supper, supplies the interpretation which reveals the purpose of His long years of hidden life. When He had washed the feet of His Apostles, He used these words : "You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also." (John xiii, 13-15.) These words we may reverently adapt and most truthfully apply to the thirty years of Our Lord's life at Nazareth. Every word and action, every toil and suffering, of those thirty years was of infinite value and is of undying, fascinating interest, because it was the word or action, the toil or suffering, of an Infinite Personality, of the Incarnate God. They were years of infinite moral preciousness. But they were also, as they were in the Divine design intended to be, years of superlatively instructive teaching. "I have given you an example that as I have done, so you do also." The teacher is the Incarnate God ; the mode of teaching is living example ; and the subject taught is the all-important and all-embracing subject of Christian living. The humble life in the home of a carpenter was doubtless chosen because the lives of the masses of mankind were to be lived in humble circumstances and with constant labour. But all, even those in high station and affluent circumstances, are bound by family ties, and they, even more than the poor, need the light and inspiration of Nazareth. "I have given you an example that as I have done, so you do also."

But the connexion of Our Lord with each of our families, or the connexion which He desires to have, is far closer and more intimate than that which consists in His having given sublime example for so many years as a member of a humble family. He desires a personal entry into every family and to become spiritually incarnate in each of its members. We are all familiar with the wonderful doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. Christ lives in His followers. He is the Head of the body and they are the members. He is the Vine and they are the branches. He communicates to them His Spirit and His Life, and they live, not they, but Christ lives in them. This wonderful process is ever going on. The Mystical Body of Christ is ever extending. In every generation a vast enrolment or rather incorporation is being effected. The full stature of the Mystical Body of Christ, the full extension of His Kingdom, will be attained only at the end of time. Now in this wonderful growth and development the family has a fundamental and privileged relation of special significance. There is an essential interdependence between the family and the ever-expanding Kingdom of Christ. The family, in its ordinary providential

role, supplies the living human material on which Christ operates and into which He infuses His Spirit and His Life. As the home is the world in miniature, as humanity is but the extension or multiplication of the family, so we can see, with a special vividness, the genesis and growth of the Kingdom of God as we view it in relation to the family. The exaltation of the family begins with the sanctification of the union between husband and wife by the Sacrament of Matrimony, which symbolizes the sacred espousals of Christ with His Church. The children of the Kingdom of Christ are provided by the family, and their citizenship in the Kingdom is effected by the Sacrament of Baptism, a veritable act of consecration transforming each into a member of the Body of Christ. The other Sacraments, the Sacraments of Confirmation and Penance, and above all the Holy Eucharist, continue the process of growth and strength increasing the spiritual stature of each and fitting each for his or her special role in the Christian family and in the Kingdom of Christ. The parents have their duties of ruling and guiding, of providing and educating, and the children have their duties of obedience, reverence, and love. There are natural inclinations towards one another in a family which are particularly helpful and form admirable groundwork for the consecrations of grace. True parents are given to devotedness in regard to their children. They think and labour and live for them. They rightly regard them as their true jewels, and—being Christian—as their heavenly jewels. The children develop their lives from within but with a sense of dependence for help, guidance, and love on their parents. Nature and grace can have a wonderful co-operation and a rich fructification in the Christian family. Its members need not look to the East or the West; the Kingdom of God is truly within them. Jesus lived for thirty years of His mortal life in a humble family. He found therein the opportunity of doing to perfection His Father's Will. We call Him Lord and Master, and so He is, and He has given us an example that, as He has done, within the narrow boundaries of a humble home and in the midst of its ordinary everyday interests and cares, so should we do also, fulfilling the Will of Our Heavenly Father and living, according to the measure of His grace, the life of Christ as it can be lived so fruitfully and meritoriously in every Christian home.

The Second Sunday after the Epiphany

(The Marriage Feast of Cana)

There was a Marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there. (Gospel: John ii, 1.)

In today's Gospel there are several features of great and salutary significance, and, we might add, of all-subduing attractiveness. The first of

these, in the order of recital, is that the Mother of Jesus was at the wedding, and indeed this fact gets prominent notice from the Evangelist. What was her precise relation to the wedded parties we are not told, but it is very likely that, being now about fifty years of age, she had some share in the conduct of the proceedings. At all events she noticed early the failure of the supply of wine, something which would be a painful mortification, in their hour of happiness, to the bridal parties and their friends. Her tender heart was moved with sympathy. This spoiling of the feast should, if at all possible, be prevented. Perhaps she could not think how it could be done. But at once her thoughts for sure relief went to her Divine Son. Whatever the remedy, He had the wisdom and the power to provide it. With manifest confidence she put the trouble before Him, not suggesting, however, what precisely He was to do. But she encountered a difficulty of an unexpected kind. There was no question of His lack of power, but His hour for His manifestation of divine power had, He told her, not yet come. Even before this tremendous difficulty Our Lady did not recoil, and we find her calmly instructing the attendants: "Whatever He shall say to you, do ye." We know the sequel. Our Lord anticipated "His hour" in response to His Mother's unspoken, but living, appeal, and by this beginning of miracles He bestowed a wedding gift of wine to last not merely for the week's celebration, but for a whole year—at least 120 gallons.

Here we all have the first lesson of today's Gospel, on the power, namely, of Our Lady's intercession. It was a power to which her Divine Son yielded before "His hour" had come. But, this being so, what limit can be put to Our Lady's power now, when long since the hour of her Divine Son has come? Nay, in the supreme moment of His Hour, as He lay hanging on the Cross, He gave His Mother, through the person of His beloved disciple, St. John, to be the Mother of us all. And so the instinctive attitude of every true Christian is an approach, with filial love and unwavering trust, "through Mary to Jesus".

The second great lesson to be learned in all time from today's Gospel is the sacredness and exalted character of the Marriage bond. There is something supremely moving in the presence of Jesus, with His Mother and disciples, at this Marriage Feast, and in His consecration thereby of the joyful festivities that surround the Marriage celebration. From the beginning Marriage had its sacred character, but, as always, Jesus had before His vision the long future and the marriages of His followers in every age, and He already had arranged in His own mind that their marriages would be for them even more privileged than the Marriage in Cana which He now joined in celebrating. He was to exalt immeasurably in the future the marriage bond, making its forging a Sacrament, a channel of divine grace to the soul, and basing its character of exaltation on nothing less than its being the image, as He intended to make it, of His own espousals with His beloved bride, the Church.

Christian spouses everywhere should feel renewed in their spirit of holiness and joy on reading today's Gospel. They may rejoice in the consecration of marriage by the presence of Jesus at the Marriage in Cana, but they can rejoice far more that their own marriage has been made heavenly in the likeness of Our Lord's own espousals with His Church, and that the Sacrament endows them with permanent rights to receive, as occasion demands, the graces which will give abundant strength and success in the serious responsibilities of their state.

A third salutary lesson that we may derive from today's Gospel arises from the character of the stupendous miracle which Our Lord performed, namely the changing of water into wine. In the minds of all, this prefigures a far more stupendous miracle to take place through all time from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, the miracle, namely, which takes place at Mass, the change of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The Sacrament of Marriage and the other Sacraments have their grace-giving value, but in a true sense they are but settings and sharings of the central jewel of the Eucharist. The Eucharist, Sacrifice and Sacrament, is the supreme treasure of the Church and of her children, and as we recall its prefiguring today in the Miracle of Cana let us exult in joy and security that ours is the possession of the marvellous conversion constantly being effected by Our Lord, of ordinary bread and wine into His Own Body and Blood. As a consequence it is our privilege to join in offering to the Adorable Trinity the most supremely precious objects of the Universe, namely the Body and Blood of Our Divine Lord.

The Third Sunday after Epiphany

(The Forgiveness of Sins)

Jesus, stretching forth His hand, touched him, saying: I will. Be thou made clean. (Gospel: Matt. viii, 3.)

The two miracles related in today's Gospel, like all the miracles of Our Divine Lord, are parables in action, conveying spiritual lessons for the people of all time. Leprosy is a particularly loathsome and malignant disease, and a striking symbol of the spiritual leprosy of mortal sin. The leper of today's Gospel was particularly stricken—St. Luke tells us he was “full of leprosy”—and in such cases the revolting sight symbolizes more especially, according to spiritual writers, the degrading sin of sensuality or impurity. The resemblances indeed are striking, the loathsomeness in each case of the disease, the unfitness of the victim to associate with others, the danger of infection and corruption, and the utter unhappiness of the victim—these similarities are striking, even obtruding, but in very truth the leprosy of the body, however repulsive, is not to be compared with the

spirit of in the Cana, heavenly land that occasion in the arises formed, is pre- from which ly and ments sgs and crifice ldren, exult vasion into to join cts of thou es of for nant The was more ality s in bers, the truth the

horrible leprosy of the soul in mortal sin. Our Lord was indeed filled with compassion for the poor leper who fell down before Him, but, in His age-long and world-wide vision, He perceived something far more distressing, namely the vast numbers, even among His own followers, who would allow themselves to be stricken with the deadly leprosy of mortal sin, especially of that sin of uncleanness which should not be even named among Christians, the sin of unchastity.

But, thanks to the infinite loving mercy and compassion of the Divine Physician, we are not left in the Gospel of today merely to contemplate the symbol of spiritual disease, but, in the complete healing and cleansing of the leper, we have an expressive figure of the far more wonderful and merciful spiritual healing and cleansing which is ever taking place in the Sacrament of Penance. We might well take the words of the leper and the answer of Our Divine Lord as aptly and admirably expressing what takes place in that secret spiritual clinic, the confessional. "Lord, if Thou willest, Thou canst make me clean." Our Lord stretched out His Hand and touched him saying: "I will; be thou made clean." These words are echoed in every absolution. The sinner approaches Our Lord's minister and asks for pardon, and the priest, endowed with power from on high, whispers in the name of His Divine Master the words of absolution, and the spiritual leprosy of sin is effectively destroyed. "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." (John xx, 23.)

In the second miracle of today's Gospel the same symbolism is illustrated and the living lesson for all time is eloquently proclaimed. The paralysis and suffering of the Centurion's slave are spiritually reproduced with appalling frequency in the long history of sin. But again, in the same history, there is the contrasting picture, in the multitudes, of faith and prayer, of resurrection and life. The faith of the Centurion is echoed by the voices of millions down through the years in those moments of supreme sacredness when they are about to receive into their souls the Body and Blood of Our Divine Lord in Holy Communion. "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof; say but the word and my soul shall be healed." Indeed, Our Lord was visibly affected by the faith of the Centurion, and He was led to give expression to His vision of the triumphant future for so many of the Gentiles all over the world. "Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you, that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven."

The combined lessons of today's two miracles should give to all poor sinners great heart of hope and the strength of joyous confidence as they contemplate the wonderful dispensation of mercy which is ever operating in our midst. The Gospels give the account of the origin and beginnings of this wonderful dispensation. But in our own day we have the full current of the vast stream of living waters which are ever available for our

healing, our resurrection, and our life. No matter what our state may be, or how low we have fallen, we have only to approach the Divine Healer with faith and confidence, after the manner of the leper and Centurion of today's Gospel, and drink of the life-giving waters which He has so abundantly provided. To every sinner today's Gospel speaks: Go, show yourself to the priest, go to him who is commissioned by the Divine Physician in His Name to forgive sin, and, through the power of the Divine whisper of Absolution, your soul shall be healed.

W. BYRNE.

NOTES ON RECENT WORK

I. DOGMATIC THEOLOGY

A BALANCED judgement of Dom Bruno Webb's book *Why Does God Permit Evil?*¹ needs to take into account its primary purpose which, as His Grace the Archbishop of Liverpool observes in his Foreword to the volume, is to offer "a practical message to the stricken, the sorrowful and the suffering, and to all who strive to bring themselves into union with Christ crucified, the Head of the mystical body of which we are the members". Sin is the greatest evil of all, and it is to human sin that the afflictions of humanity must be attributed. The happy state in which the first human couple were preternaturally and supernaturally constituted by God was brought to an end by their sin. The prize of eternal glory must be earned now at the cost of death and suffering. Yet from that primordial disaster, such is the divine wisdom, power and goodness, God was able to draw a great good. For a solidarity in guilt He substitutes a new solidarity in grace; and the new Head of humanity in whom God's supernatural bounty is restored to us, is no longer a mere man however highly endowed, but God Himself incarnate in our nature. Suffering and death had come upon humanity as the punishment of sin; Christ will take upon Himself those physical evils and will use them to repair the ravages of sin. By His Passion and Death He makes superabundant satisfaction to God for the sin of humanity and merits that the flood-gates of grace shall be thrown open to men once more. Incorporated with Him by Baptism we share the fruits of His redemptive act. But we must share His sufferings too, filling up in our flesh "those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, for His body which is the Church". But the human sufferer is no longer without hope; his pain and sorrow, so long as he accepts them in union with Christ, are now raised to a new plane; they have a new significance and value, for they are the material by which, through Christ, he can expiate his own sins, and even the sins of others, so that suffering with Christ with Him he may be glorified.

This, in general, is the theme of Dom Bruno's book. Perhaps on some points of detail he will not meet with general agreement, as when he says, for example, that the sufferings of baptized infants—unless the inspired Scriptures are to be rendered meaningless—must be held to serve as a means of their growth in sanctifying grace.² The argument which he draws from the case of the Holy Innocents, who "received sanctifying grace and gained heaven, not only without any moral act on their part but without receiving any sacrament either", is not convincing because the case is not parallel. The Holy Innocents were martyrs, having suffered death inflicted upon them *in odium Christi*—a claim which can hardly be made

¹ *Present Problems Series.* (Burns Oates & Washbourne. Price 2s. and 3s. 6d.)
² Pp. 105–8.

for the purely natural ailments to which little children are subject. Nor are we sure that we have properly understood Dom Bruno's explanation of what happens at the moment of death.

At death (he writes, p. 71) each soul comes face to face with Infinite Mercy, to accept or to refuse irrevocably. . . . The will's choice, once made with full and exhaustive vision of the entire issue, is by its very nature irrevocable, since there exists no new motive which can ever be offered to change its decision already made. . . . Such was the choice of the angels at their trial, such is our own at death. . . . *At the trial of the angels and at that of the human soul at its departure from the body*, God so enlightens it that all the motives whatsoever are seen in a single glance. . . . Having made its decision in the full light of all the motives that could possibly draw it, this decision of its very nature cannot be anything else than final (p. 72).¹

It is to be assumed that "this trial of the human soul at its departure from the body", when it "comes face to face with Infinite Mercy" is neither the Particular Judgement, which takes place after death, nor (still less) the Beatific Vision, which is granted only when a favourable sentence has been passed. This final illumination of the mind must therefore take place before death, i.e. during this life. It is admittedly a comforting doctrine that God grants a final trial to every man during his last moments on earth, giving him a clear and complete intuition of eternal issues upon which he may make his last and irrevocable decision. But we doubt whether there is any clear warrant for it in Revelation. All that St. Thomas teaches is that the dissolution of the human compound renders it intrinsically impossible for the will to recede after death from the habitual disposition in regard to its last end in which it was found at the moment of *decease*.

But, these and other minor points apart, Dom Bruno's presentation of the doctrine of the Mystical Body in its bearing on the problem of human suffering will be not without utility to the general reader.

The primary purpose of the book being as described, it is in our opinion much to be regretted that the author should have devoted one fifth of it to highly problematic speculations concerning the origin of animal suffering and cosmic upheavals.² We have space only to consider briefly his theory of evolution, which may be thus stated in his own words :

By their united co-operation upon the forces of primordial matter through the long ages angelic agencies have set them into action according to the definite plan of God, drawing out this plan by successive stages rising upwards through the electronic, mineral, vegetative and sentient spheres. . . .

A cook, intent through some malicious motive on spoiling his master's dish, could introduce certain of the ingredients in wrong proportions. . . . The cook is still using the same ingredients, it is the proportion in which they are introduced which is at fault. So the fallen angels which have power over the universe and of (*sic*) this planet in particular, being motived by an intense angelic hatred of God and of all creatures, have acted upon the forces of matter, actuating them in false proportions so far as lay in their power, and this from the very outset of evolution, thus producing a deep-set disorder in the very heart of the universe which manifests itself today in the various physical evils which we find in nature, and among them the violence, the savagery and the suffering of animal life. This does not mean, for instance, that an earthquake or a thunderstorm is

¹ Italics mine.

² Pp. 33-53.

due directly to satanic action. It is due to purely natural causes, but these causes are what they are now owing to the deep-set disorder in the heart of nature resulting from this action of fallen spirits, most subtly intermingled with the action of good spirits, throughout the long ages of the world's formation (pp. 48-50).

Death in an animal is not an evil at all, and there is nothing in animal death as such which necessarily involves suffering. . . . Animal death as such is a limitation, a negation of further life, but not a physical evil since it is not the deprivation of any perfection which is demanded by animal nature; nor need it involve a trace of suffering, and were nature today as it would have been had it come forth untampered with from God's creative hand, there is no reason why the mutual limitation exercised by animals upon each other . . . should have involved even the first degree of suffering (pp. 40-1).

Briefly: nature is not what it would have been had the devils not tampered with it in the process of formation.

Whether St. Augustine and St. Gregory of Nyssa (both quoted by Dom Bruno in support of the doctrine of evolution) did in fact hold some theory of transformism is a debated question which it is not our intention to discuss. What we think to be quite certain is that they were not inclined to favour a process of evolution in which the malicious intervention of a second cause would be permitted to divert its course from that which God originally intended. Even granted that they ascribed the differentiation of species to a purposive impulse implanted in the forces of nature by their divine Author, we doubt very much whether they contemplated the possibility that God would permit that impulse to be so deflected by free created agencies that the nature of things now proves to be different from what the Creator eternally designed. Such a theory, involving the admission that things have not come forth undisfigured from God's creative hand, would render extremely precarious the reasoning of Catholic philosophers who claim to see in the nature of things and in their wonderful order the reflected features of an intelligent, good and all-powerful Creator. It is for this reason that St. Thomas and theologians generally, while acknowledging that angelic beings (even the demons) possess considerable power in the manipulation of natural causes, refuse to allow them any initiative in the essential formation of nature itself. It is for the same reason, i.e. because they have no power over the constitution of nature as such, that angels cannot by their own power work miracles. "Quidquid facit angelus," says St. Thomas, "vel quaecumque alia creatura propria virtute, hoc fit secundum ordinem naturae creatae."¹

It is, to say the least, unnecessary to have recourse to diabolical interference in order to explain the origin of physical evils in general and of animal suffering in particular. The traditional teaching on the point—that God is the cause *per accidens* of physical evils, and that He makes them conspire to the order of the universe as a whole—is in itself reasonable and has stood the test of time.²

Only those who knew Faà di Bruno's *Catholic Belief* in its old form,

¹ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 110, art. 4. Cf. *ibid.* ad. 2; also *Contra Gentes*, II, 43.

² See *Summa*, I, 19, 9; I, 48, 2, ad. 3; I, 49, 2; *De Malo*, I, *passim*. On animals in particular, *De Ver.*, V, 6.

with its diffuse and wearisome disquisitions on controversial points which have long ceased to have any actual interest, will appreciate the enormous improvements which Dr. Cartmell's new edition has effected in it.¹ Described by Cardinal Manning as "one of the most complete and useful manuals of doctrine", and originally designed by the author as a convenient outline of Catholic doctrine for the use of Catholics themselves and as a book which might suitably be placed in the hands of prospective converts, it still—having regard to its size and price—deserves the same description, and is now even more adapted to serve its original purpose. Controversial needs have changed and new problems occupy men's minds. The editor has so revised the book as to take account of these, yet without in any degree yielding to that tendency towards compromise which tempts some of our apologists. Let the following passage on Hell serve as an example: "The fire is real, and not merely metaphorical fire. Our Lord mentioned it too frequently and in too many varied contexts for any doubt to remain as to its real character. How the fire can torture spirits we know not. After the resurrection it will torture both body and soul" (p. 103). Excellent; on this point there is really nothing more to be said.

A shilling is a small price to pay for Fr. Ailbe Luddy's *A Bernardine Mariology*,² which, with its careful selection of extracts from St. Bernard (taken, by the way, from the excellent Mount Melleray translation published by Browne & Nolan), provides an outline of the saintly Doctor's theology on our Lady, including many characteristically beautiful passages more suitable for meditation than for mere scientific study. But Fr. Ailbe has not been entirely content to let St. Bernard speak for himself; he interweaves a commentary which among other useful purposes serves that of showing that, although Mary's most illustrious panegyrist eschews the dry formality of the schools when writing of her, his Mariology is nevertheless truly systematic. Incidentally the author devotes some ten pages to the task of proving that St. Bernard did not, as is commonly stated, deny the Immaculate Conception. On the force of his arguments as he compresses them here it would be unfair to pass anything in the nature of a definite judgement, since Fr. Ailbe refers us to their more developed form elsewhere. The chief difficulty, of course, is the famous letter of St. Bernard to the canons of Lyons. While remaining open to persuasion, all we would venture to say is that it is by no means so evident as Fr. Ailbe claims it to be that the *conceptio*, or *conceptus*, which St. Bernard refuses to acknowledge as holy, is *active* and not passive conception; nor is it certain that the canons did not mean to celebrate the passive conception of Mary. In any case it is not easy to see why St. Bernard should show himself so much opposed to celebrating an active conception. It had been done before in the Church, in the case of St. John the Baptist. However that may be, any step towards showing that St. Bernard was

¹ Burns Oates & Washbourne (pp. viii + 199; 2s. 6d. net).

² Mount Melleray, Waterford (pp. viii + 72).

indeed an advocate of Mary's great privilege will be welcomed by all students of theology.

On the question of Mary's part in our Redemption Fr. Ailbe confines himself, naturally, to describing it according to the teaching of St. Bernard. And since no convincing argument from the writings of the Saint can be drawn to favour either side in the famous controversy which still divides theologians on this matter, the author does not pronounce in favour of the one or the other. One of the more recent developments in this controversy is worthy of notice. It is well known that the doctrine now advocated by many theologians, which attributes to our Lady an immediate and formal co-operation in objective Redemption, is open to a serious objection: How could Mary, who needed the grace of Christ in order to be able to merit at all, be a partner in that meritorious and expiatory activity which made grace originally available? A new indication that none of the solutions so far advanced by defenders of the thesis is completely satisfactory may be seen in the fact that the Abbé Lebon has now suggested yet another.¹ It should be emphasized in justice to the writer that he advances the suggestion tentatively and with the greatest possible diffidence, and as a hypothesis for which he claims nothing more than that it is not evidently impossible. The famous objection rests, he says quite truly, upon the assumption that no human being can merit *de condigno* without sanctifying grace. But is this principle, he asks, quite certain and of universal application? "Among the theologians who have elaborated the treatise *De Merito* none, so far as I know, has based his principles and theses upon the consideration of any other case than that of the ordinary human being, taken as a type and representative of humanity saved *de jure* through Christ's Redemption. . . . Logically, therefore, these principles can be applied only to human beings who find themselves in that condition. If someone is not an ordinary human being, then they cannot be applied to him unless it is shown that the reasons on which they are based hold also in his case." Now our Lady, he continues, is in no ordinary case; she is the Mother of God, predestined to be a partner in His redemptive work. The writer then suggests that, while Mary's personal merits were due to her sanctifying grace, her public or co-redemptive merits (those by which she co-operated with Christ in objective redemption) rested directly not upon sanctifying grace but upon the high function of her divine Motherhood.

There can be no doubt that, if what the writer surmises is possible, the difficulty is triumphantly solved. But is it possible? Is it possible for any human being, however high his dignity, however sublime his function, to merit in the supernatural order without sanctifying grace? We had occasion two years ago in these pages to observe that, whatever might be the outcome of the controversy concerning our Lady as Co-redemptrix, it would not prove to be sterile since it would undoubtedly lead to a more

¹Ephem. Theol. Loran., Oct.-Dec., 1939, pp. 711 ff.

thorough investigation of what Redemption means.¹ The Abbé Lebon's theory illustrates the justice of the remark, for one is led by it to inquire what is the intrinsic meaning and source of supernatural merit. One conclusion would immediately follow if the writer's supposition were true: Christ, the Word Incarnate, did not need grace in order to merit our salvation. If the dignity of the divine Motherhood was such that it could dispense in Mary the necessity of grace for merit, then *a fortiori* it was possible for Christ, independently of His grace, to merit in virtue of His divine Personality. If on the other hand it were found that even Christ could not have merited for us without grace, then that impossibility would hold *a fortiori* for His Mother.

Suarez, of course, held that the *gratia unionis* was alone sufficient to make the acts of Christ meritorious;² but in this he seems to have departed from the view of St. Thomas, who consistently attributes the meritorious character of the actions of Christ to the sanctifying grace and charity with which His soul was endowed. So, answering the question whether Christ merited for himself,³ he mentions as the third condition for condign merit that there must be proportionate equality between the action and its reward, concluding that, since every action of Christ was informed by charity, He merited by His every act. In particular this is the reason why He merited by His Passion.⁴ The same explanation of the merit of Christ, extended now to His merit for others, is given briefly in the following passage :

The works of Christ are to Himself and to His members what the works of any other man in the state of grace are to himself. But it is manifest that any man in the state of grace who suffers for justice sake, by that very fact merits salvation for himself. Therefore Christ by His Passion merited salvation not merely for Himself but for all His members (*Summa*, III, 48, 1).

Moreover, the attribution of Christ's merit to His grace is not only *de facto* but *de jure*. Not only does St. Thomas argue : Christ had grace; therefore His acts were meritorious. He argues also conversely : Christ's actions were meritorious ; therefore He must have had grace :

All merit (he writes) is through grace. But Christ merited for Himself and for us. Therefore He had grace. (III Sent. dist., XIII, q. 1, art. 1, *Sed contra*(2); also *De Ver.*, XXIX, art. 1, *Sed contra*, 2.)

Had St. Thomas contemplated the possibility of Christ meriting without grace he would never have allowed such an argument to pass unchallenged. A distinction in the major premise between merit in the ordinary man and merit in the Word Incarnate would have sufficed to invalidate the conclusion. For St. Thomas, therefore, sanctifying grace is so intrinsically

¹ CLERGY REVIEW, XVII, Dec., 1939, p. 501.

² *Disp.*, XXXIX, sect. 2, n. 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, art. 5.

³ III Sent. dist., XVIII, q. 1, art. 2.

necessary for the meritorious character of human activity that no personal dignity, even that of the Word Incarnate himself, can supply its place. For St. Thomas the divinity of Christ is a *circumstance* in regard to His merit; an important circumstance, because it makes His merit infinite; but not more than a circumstance. "The merit of Christ," he writes, "had a certain infinity from the circumstance of His person, which was of infinite dignity".¹ But that infinite dignity is not the source of His merit as such:

Although (he writes, *ibid.* art. 5, ad. 4) the merit of Christ had a certain infinity from the dignity of His Person, nevertheless it had the character of merit as such (*rationem meriti*) from habitual grace, without which there can be no merit.²

The Abbé Lebon appears himself, later in his article, slightly to withdraw from the extreme position that he had taken up; for, having suggested (p. 714) that the divine Maternity is the *immediate* principle of Mary's meritorious co-operation in objective redemption, he seems still (p. 731) to acknowledge its insufficiency when he demands (independently of the merits of Christ) a special gift in her which, "without justifying her, was the source of the objective proportionate equality of her action with the reward of eternal life", and therefore the immediate principle of her co-redemptive merit. The writer thus finds himself obliged to postulate in Mary a special grace which presents the following unusual combination of features: (1) It is independent of the redemptive merits of Christ. This he is bound to hold since only so will it serve to solve the fundamental difficulty which it is intended to solve. (2) It does not justify her or make her soul pleasing to God. This he must hold under pain of having to withdraw at least one justifying grace from the universal causality of Christ's redemptive act. (3) It elevates her activity to the supernatural order, but without (we must assume) supernaturalizing her soul and its faculties. Theology, we may safely assert, knows of no such gift. Nor would it be too much to suggest that a theory which renders it necessary to invent so complicated (not to say self-contradictory) a grace has little to recommend it to the acceptance of theologians.

In view of the apparently insuperable obstacle which the notion of merit opposes to the thesis in question, we have sometimes wondered whether some defender of it may not one day arise who will say that merit has nothing to do with the case. Why not be content, he might suggest, to hold that Mary co-operated in our redemption precisely in so far as she co-operated in the Incarnation by her free consent to the divine Maternity (all question of the meritorious quality of that consent being

¹ *De Ver.*, XXIX, art. 3, ad. 4.

² In the light of what seems to be the clear teaching of St. Thomas on this point it is surprising that even a Dominican theologian (Ch. V, Héris: *Somme Théologique*, trad. française; *Le Verbe Incarné*, tome 3me, p. 348) can vacillate to the extent of admitting that "à n'envisager que les personnes, il n'est pas de bien, si élevé soit-il, que le Christ ne puisse obtenir", and of holding that grace is necessary in Him only in order to make His merit "parfait et adequat".

set aside as irrelevant)? The Incarnation is itself redemptive, and surely Mary co-redeems since she co-operates in bringing the Incarnation about. Unfortunately for such a facile solution of the problem, the teaching of the Church forbids us adequately to identify the Redemption with the Incarnation. It is true that this "mystical" view of Redemption, which sees the whole of humanity as it were deified through the Word's assumption of a human nature, was greatly stressed by the Eastern Fathers (especially against the Nestorians) and forms the background of the whole of the theology of Irenaeus. But this conception was never exclusive of the paramount role which our Saviour's Passion and Death played in the work of our salvation. Christ redeemed us not merely by what He was, but especially by what He did. And therefore those who would explain the Catholic doctrine of Redemption without the vital notions of merit and satisfaction find themselves confronted with the definitions of the Council of Trent, according to which Christ "by His holy Passion on the wood of the Cross *merited* justification for us and made *satisfaction* for us the God the Father";¹ so that it becomes a heresy to deny "that the sin of Adam is taken away by any other remedy than the *merit* of the one Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ".² As the notions of merit and satisfaction are integral to the Catholic doctrine of Redemption, so they must be to any explanation of co-redemption, and this is the reason why the Papal pronouncements which are concerned with Mary as Co-redemptrix abound in references to her meritorious and expiatory activity.³

It seems, therefore, that those who would show that Mary co-operated formally and immediately in objective redemption must, if they can, reconcile their thesis with the theological notion of merit. If they cannot, then their thesis suffers accordingly. But even though the thesis may suffer, the notion of merit will gain from the clearer elucidation of it which the controversy must occasion. Above all, this conception will gain if it can be freed from the atmosphere of "commercialism" with which it is associated in many minds. Perhaps it is in deeper meditation on the merit of our Redeemer that our ideas will become clarified. It is when we consider how, even in the Word Incarnate, the root of merit is charity; how the first reason assigned by St. Thomas for the expiatory character of the Passion of Christ is "the greatness of the charity which was the motive of His suffering"⁴—that we begin to understand that the merit of human beings, if it be a commerce at all, is a commerce of charity, a competition in love, wherein the Creator gives all out of His infinite abundance and the creature gives willingly whatever he can. The merit of Christ, and its implications in regard to merit in us, may form the subject of a future study.

G. D. SMITH.

¹ Denzinger, 799.

² Denzinger, 790.
³ See e.g. Leo XIII, *Iustitia semper*; Pius X, *Ad diem illum*; Benedict XV, *Inter sodalicia*.

⁴ III, 48, 2.

II. PHILOSOPHY

The temptation for teachers to identify the history of philosophy with philosophy, or at least to substitute the one for the other, has always been strong. History of philosophy, being more personal and concrete, is a much more teachable subject and does not involve so much the communication of ideas as the assimilation of facts which can be learned. Doubtless it is true that no intelligent view of philosophical truths can be gained without some knowledge of their origin and development; but this knowledge is by way of introduction to the consideration of these truths in themselves, and cannot be a substitute for it. The historian has a double task: to set out the ideas of the philosophers of the past as they appeared to them, and to judge of them in the light of the truth which he has himself acquired by hard thinking. Both these tasks are difficult. What an effort is required in order to enter into the working of another mind we all know by experience, and this effort is so much the greater as the other mind is removed from us in time and in its whole intellectual atmosphere. Moreover, the tendency to read history backwards, and to project the ideas of the writer into the minds of the dead, is greater in the history of thought than it is even in the history of affairs, where external facts exercise some controlling influence.

Three books dealing with the history of thought have recently appeared, and it can be said that two of them, at least, have successfully avoided the pitfalls just mentioned. The first is an account of the essence of the philosophy of Plotinus.¹ Though it is a book of only some 100 pages, the author has contrived to present a most lucid account of the fundamental ideas of Plotinus' philosophy without distorting them, and its value is much greater than that of many a much larger work. He is certainly not uncritical of that philosophy, but he shows how the inconsistencies in it arose inevitably from the various strands of thought received by Plotinus from the earlier Greek philosophers, and interwoven, though not perfectly blended, in his own. Of these the chief were the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. Plotinus' master, "the mysterious Ammonius Saccas", tried to reconcile Plato and Aristotle: and to his teaching may be due the great and insufficiently realized influence of Aristotle on Plotinus. "In his conception of a First Principle higher than Nous and the Ideas, he is, as it has now become clear, not original, but stands at the end of a tradition of which the dominant feature is the assimilation of Plato and Aristotle. . . . The One as supreme source of being is really Aristotle's God carried to a yet higher degree of remoteness."

In the body of his book Mr. Armstrong gives us an analysis and a

¹ *The Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in the Philosophy of Plotinus.* By A. H. Armstrong. (C.U.P. 1940. 7s. 6d. net.)

criticism of the members of the Plotinian trilogy—the One, the Nous, and the Psyche—tracing the thought of Plotinus back to its origins, and so elucidating both it and the inconsistencies which are to be found in it. For instance, Plotinus sometimes, under Pythagorean influence, represents the One as a bare mathematical unity to which it is impossible to apply any predicate whatsoever, and this, as Mr. Armstrong points out, is irreconcilable with the other and more central Plotinian doctrine that the One is *energeia* and so willing and loving itself. In this latter sense it can be absolutely transcendent and yet a true cause: and it is this which Mr. Armstrong considers, and it seems rightly, to be the most valuable contribution of Plotinus to philosophic thought. Plotinus arrived at his doctrine of the Absolute, the ground of being, both by way of his “positive theology”—by whose means we can know *of* it, that it must be there, through our knowledge of the relative beings which derive from it—and from that part of his “negative theology” which Mr. Armstrong calls the “negative theology of positive transcendence”, the “analogical” method. To anyone acquainted with the development of Christian theology it is obvious that we have here ideas which were to be of the first importance. Mr. Armstrong asks the question whether the hypostases, Nous and the transcendent Psyche, are necessary to Plotinus’ cosmology at all. He thinks they are not, but that their functions can legitimately be attributed to the Absolute. If by this is meant that these last two hypostases should not be, as they are in Plotinus, subordinate to the One, there is no reason to disagree; but it appears that Mr. Armstrong would wish to discard the doctrine of the three hypostases altogether, whereas Plotinus was struggling to reach a truth which has only been made accessible by revelation.

Mr. Armstrong thinks that it is to the spirit of religious devotion found in the *Enneads* that the great influence of Plotinus on Christian thought is to be attributed, but this very spirit is surely due to what Mr. Armstrong himself calls “the core of Plotinus’ philosophy, the source of the vitality of his thought”, namely his mystical experience. That Plotinus on several occasions attained to the mystical union marked him out from all other pagan philosophers—and his philosophy itself is thereby made congenial to the mind of St. Augustine, and through him to Western Christendom. He is thus in the main stream of European philosophy, and even of world philosophy, inasmuch as with him intellectual intuition is pre-eminent and metaphysical doctrine essential. This is also the characteristic of Eastern philosophy, in contrast with the emphasis on action and use which has marked modern philosophy in the West.

This contrast has been well displayed in a recent book by Fr. Gerald Vann, O.P., on St. Thomas Aquinas.¹ His main aim is to show the synthetic character of St. Thomas’ philosophy, in which all the various currents of thought and knowledge were united in a harmonious whole, not by their mere juxtaposition, but by recognizing the distinctive spheres of the

¹ *St. Thomas Aquinas*. (London : Hague & Gill, Ltd. 1940. 6s. net.)

different sciences, and assigning to each its proper place in the whole body of knowledge. In this the knowledge of the mystic holds the supreme position, as has in recent years been made plain in the writings of Garrigou-Lagrange and Maritain.

St. Thomas was faced with "the problem of the rival claims of this world and the next, of science and wisdom, of reason and revelation"; and it is his solution of this problem which constitutes a unique achievement. The elements to be integrated in the Thomist synthesis were, according to Fr. Vann, firstly the Christian revelation, secondly the currents of Jewish thought as embodied in the Christian tradition and expressed by Jewish philosophers, thirdly the Platonic and Neo-Platonic influence culminating in Avicenna, fourthly the anti-rationalist theology of the Augustinians, fifthly the anti-religious rationalism of the Averroists, sixthly Aristotle, seventhly the legacies of Roman and Judaeo-Christian law, eighthly the legacy of classical literature, ninthly the development of a mystical tradition in which Eastern and Western currents combined, tenthly the idea of knowledge not primarily as a means to practical achievement but as the highest kind of life, and "finally the recognition of the organic character of Christian truth; and the idea, implicit in it, of a universal synthesis to include the whole universe of being, natural and supernatural, human and divine".

Fr. Vann claims that in so unifying human thought St. Thomas not only succeeded in correcting the inconsistencies and aberrations of his predecessors, such as those which we have noticed in Plotinus, but did more: he unified "the characteristic thought, the characteristic outlooks of East and West". This is the main thesis of Fr. Vann's book which, though it gives us an account of St. Thomas' life, of the material he had to work on, that is, the scientific, philosophic and theological knowledge available in his time, and the result of his work as set out in the *Summa Theologica*, does so in order to show that St. Thomas not only effected a synthesis of the various elements of Western thought, but that his scheme was so elastic and universal that it was capable of adapting itself to any future discoveries, and had a place not only for the activism of the West but also for the mystic contemplation of the East.

This may be illustrated by a passage in which Fr. Vann speaks of St. Thomas' doctrine of personality "so far removed from the individualism of the modern West. The latter is characteristic of the shallowness of the rationalist-activist outlook, in which the accent is always on doing and therefore on the doer. Thomist personalism is able to safeguard and indeed to emphasize the value and importance of the person because it sees the perfection of the person as essentially centred in God and, derivatively, in other ends outside the self. The individual has the right to happiness and to the desire of happiness: the individual person is more important than the State: but the individual finds his happiness and perfection in the service of God and society. . . . The acosmism, and therefore the nega-

tion of life, so common in the mysticism of the East, are thus avoided; so, equally, are the self-seeking, the individualism, the activism and commercialism of the West." In the fact, then, that Thomism in its true essence recognizes not only the claims of reason but also those of intuition and contemplation in the pursuit of wisdom, Fr. Vann sees a great opportunity for it in the modern world.

This opportunity presents itself in religion, Thomism offering a means whereby the intuitional vitalist interpretation of it in Eastern orthodoxy may be reunited with the rational interpretation which has characterized post-Renaissance Catholicism: and in the struggle in the West between rationalist Marxism and intuitional emotional Nazism. The appeal of the latter is mystical: State-worship, the *mystique de la force*, the mysticism of race and blood, selfless service . . . such things appeal to men who have lost God, but must have an Absolute to worship. On the other hand Marxism appealed to the practical, the orderly, the rational side of man; showing, as was supposed, the self-sufficiency of the material world, and how by a certain ordering of it man's life might be deprived of all physical, and consequently of all mental, ills. It is Fr. Vann's hope that Thomism, with its recognition of the claims of both contemplation and action, of worship and rational order, may be able to construct a synthesis which can satisfy the longings of those who have been driven either to the worship of a false Absolute or to the denial of an Absolute altogether.

This is, in fact, the central characteristic of Marxism—its denial of the Absolute. Marx derived this metaphysical doctrine, if it may be so called, from Feuerbach, an account of whose views has recently been published.¹ Feuerbach's importance is not in the history of thought but of action, for he is the link between Hegel and Marx, so giving the latter a philosophical parent in the evolutionary aspect of Hegel's doctrine, and thereby strengthening the appeal of Marxism. Mr. Chamberlain prints on his title page the aphorism of Protagoras "Man is the measure of all things" and it was Feuerbach's especial care to show the truth of this with respect to God and religion. According to Mr. Chamberlain "the proposition at the heart of Feuerbach's work is that religion arises out of man's necessary and unconscious deification of himself", and according to this criterion Feuerbach must be one of the most religious men who have ever lived, as indeed he thought himself in his German way, claiming to be "another Luther". Mr. Chamberlain's work, it should be said, is in praise of Feuerbach, but he seems to do less than justice to this inconsistent and somewhat superficial thinker. Though, as the author shows in his defence of it, the thought of Feuerbach is riddled with contradictions, he at least held consistently to one truth, the unity of the universe. Certainly, he debased this unity from a unity of mind to one of feeling and even of sensation, and it is this that leads him to most of his antinomies. For example, he wavers between

¹ *Heaven wasn't his Destination*. By William B. Chamberlain. (Allen & Unwin. 1941. 8s. 6d. net.)

pure sensationalism, which admits only the deliverances of the senses, and the acknowledgement of a direct mental perception of identity and difference : in other words, between nominalism and realism. "Everything," he says, "is sensibly apprehended," but, as Mr. Chamberlain remarks, "he had to back up a bit from this position", and contradict himself. "Backing up a bit" was, in fact, a favourite pastime with him ; he learnt it perhaps from his early devotion to Hegel and "the portentous power of the negative". He did it over materialism—for he denies that he is a materialist and yet affirms that "foodstuff is thoughtstuff", "men are what they eat". He does it over religion, for he denies that he is an atheist and affirms that God is man's subjectivity.

Though Feuerbach abolished God and Heaven, and even thought itself, one thing remained in him which is uncommon in a German philosopher—a sense of humour. Even though we may take his latest admirer's word for it that heaven wasn't his destination, yet perhaps even now he may be amused at the spectacle of earnest rationalists taking his philosophy seriously.

R. P. PHILLIPS.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

FREEDOM TO MARRY

May it not be held that the obligation of communicating certain matrimonial documents through the diocesan chancery, as set out in the recent Instruction (*CLERGY REVIEW*, October, 1941, p. 201), refers to cases where one of the parties belongs, or has recently belonged, to a diocese in a foreign country, not to dioceses of the same country? Where the dioceses are contiguous, or even with a boundary line in the same city, it is a needless labour to transmit these documents through the chancery. (E. W.)

REPLY

Readers may be reminded that on page 207 we gave it as our opinion that this new regulation, and any other new obligations contained in the Instruction of the Congregation of the Sacraments, 29 June, 1941, need not be observed until the clergy have been so directed by their own Ordinaries.

With this reservation, it is quite clear that the interchange of documents in question is not restricted to the cases of persons belonging to another country, but applies equally to different dioceses within the same country. A previous Instruction, 4 July, 1921, which is now mentioned in all the manuals, was meant chiefly for foreign emigrants "in exteris dissitisque regionibus ad quas frequentes demigrant ex Europa opifices", and n. 3 of this document contained in substance the direction now found in that of 29 June, 1941, n. 4 a. But in the 1941 Instruction the direction occurs within a section dealing with the obligations of all parish priests of different dioceses, and neither in this place nor in the suggested "form" is it implied that the regulation is restricted to dioceses in different countries. Indeed, the Instruction given in 1921, though chiefly for the cases of foreigners, could be understood as a recommendation for all cases, and was so interpreted by the writers, e.g. Gougnard, *De Matrimonio* (1937), p. 70: "... expedit ut sit recognitum curia episcopali . . . quod non est urgendum, nisi documentum mittendum sit extra patriam." It is quite evident that the 1941 Instruction is an advance upon that of 1921, just as the latter is an advance upon that of 6 March, 1911, which contained no mention of the episcopal curia, except an admonition to Ordinaries urging them to secure the observance of the law by the priests subject to them. *Festina lente* is a well-known Roman rule, and we may doubtless expect, say in 1961, a further Instruction which will convert "valde exoptat" into "id praecipit" and make the diocesan *nihil obstat* necessary even for the marriages of parties living within the same diocese.

If the new Instruction is observed, it will mean, of course, more work

for everyone concerned, and more often than not the labour involved will be needless ; that is to say, there will be many cases where one is already certain that the parties are free to marry, and the interchange of documents will not increase this certainty. But the same applies to the publication of banns which is often unnecessary, yet no one may for this reason neglect to publish them unless a dispensation has been obtained from the Ordinary.

E. J. M.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM ROMAN CONGREGATIONS

With reference to the Instruction on Marriage Preliminaries summarized in the October issue, page 199, is the method of issuing an Instruction a new departure or not ? What is the binding force of an Instruction ? (M. L.)

REPLY

The method was employed long before the Code, particularly by *S.C. de Propaganda Fide*, e.g. the Instruction to the English bishops on University Education, 6 August, 1867, *Fontes*, n. 4868. It is clearly defined in the *Motu Proprio* of Benedict XV, 25 September, 1917, printed among the prefaces to the Code : "II. Sacrae Romanae Congregationes *nova Decreta Generalia* iamnunc ne ferant, nisi qua gravis Ecclesiae universae necessitas aliud suadeat.¹ Ordinarium igitur earum munus in hoc genere erit tum curare ut Codicis praescripta religiose serventur, tum *Instructiones*, si res ferat, edere, quae iisdem Codicis praeceptis maiorem et lucem afferant et efficientiam pariant. Eiusmodi vero documenta sic conficiantur, ut non modo sint, sed apparcent etiam quasi quaedam explanations et complementa canonum, qui idcirco in documentorum contextu peropportune afferentur.". It is apparent in the recent Instruction how closely the Sacred Congregation has kept to the text of the Code.

The binding force of an Instruction can be perceived from the terms used in the document. Thus in the Instruction from the Congregation of Religious on the second year of the novitiate, 23 November, 1921 : "Sanctitas porro Sua sententiam probavit simulque mandavit, ut hac de re instrucatio ederetur, cui omnes et singulac congregations religiosae . . . integre se conformare teneantur." In the Instruction on Marriage Preliminaries a very clear distinction is drawn in the phrase quoted in a footnote, CLERGY REVIEW, October 1941, p. 201, between the desires (valde exoptat) and the commands (id vero praecepit) of the Congregation.

What then is the difference between an Instruction so expressed and a new general decree issued as determined in n. III of the *Motu Proprio*, 15 September, 1917 ? Apart from the less solemn form in which it is

¹ n. III determines the procedure when such new general decrees are made.

issued, the difference is that the preceptive portion of an Instruction is not a new law but a determination of the mode in which an existing law is to be observed. It is the law, for example, that the death of a former partner to a valid marriage must be proved before a second marriage is permitted; various Instructions, as far back as that of the Holy Office, 13 May, 1868, and as recent as that issued by *S.C. de Disciplina Sacramentorum*, 15 August, 1936, determine the method of proof. The law has always required proof of freedom to marry, as in Canon 1020, §1; the recent Instruction prescribes that the exchange of documents to this end, when the parish priests concerned are of different dioceses, shall be done through the diocesan curia. It must be conceded that a point may be reached when the preceptive part of an Instruction is of such a character that it appears to be a new decree rather than the determination of an existing one. If this should happen it is a matter for the respective bodies of the Roman Curia to settle amongst themselves, since n. III of the *Motu Proprio*, 25 September, 1917, requires a definite procedure to be observed by a Roman Congregation before a new general decree may be issued.

Is there any difference between the binding force in conscience of a preceptive Instruction and that of a new decree? In our opinion there is none, apart from the fact that, as in all laws, the disregard of lawful authority is graver according to the gravity of the matter.¹ Though it may be stated, therefore, in principle, that a decree is obligatory but an Instruction merely directive, as in Vermeersch-Creusen, *Epitome*, I, §132, an exception must be made for those points within an Instruction which, from their wording, are clearly preceptive. ". . . instructiones per se habent vim declarativam et directivam; quandoque tamen legem dant vel leges praexistentes compleunt et mandante vel approbante Papa leges universales sunt".² "Licetne istis Instructionibus quaedam, non contra sed ultra Codicem praecipere? Quod affirmandum est, cum a S. Pontifice dicantur esse complementa canonum. . . . Quid tunc *Instructiones* a novis legibus differunt? Novae leges per se stant; *Instructiones* accedunt ad legem, eam circumdant et quasi vestiunt . . . Sic in iure civili hodierno, usus habet ut, post latam a Parlamento legem, Rex seu princeps rei publicae decretum conficiat quo, per varia iussa, executioni legis consulti."³

E. J. M.

NUPTIAL BLESSING ON ALL SOULS' DAY

The rubric preceding the Votive Mass "pro Sponso et Sponsa" directs that neither the Mass nor the solemn nuptial blessing is permitted on All Souls' Day. Does this mean that All Souls' Day is to be added to the usual "closed times" when the solemnization of marriage is forbidden? (W.)

¹ Cf. CLERGY REVIEW, 1937, XIII, for a similar discussion on the binding force of local legislation.

² Sipos, *Enchiridion*, p. 34.

³ Vermeersch, *Periodica*, 1920, IX, p. 18.

REPLY

The Nuptial Blessing in the form "extra Missam", as contained in the Appendix to the Roman Ritual and in our *Ordo Administrandi*, for the use of those who enjoy the indult, may be given on All Souls' Day. The directions of some authors who appear to hold the contrary must be understood as applying to places which do not enjoy an indult: in the common liturgical law the nuptial blessing is inseparable from Mass.

By "solemnization" of marriage is meant chiefly the nuptial blessing,¹ which is forbidden always in the closed times unless permission is obtained from the Ordinary. But this permission is itself subject to the due observance of the liturgical laws regarding the Mass to be said—"salvis legibus liturgicis" (Canon 1108, §3). These liturgical laws are quite distinct from the law of "closed times", and in *Addit. et Var.*, II, 2, they determine whether the Nuptial Mass is to be the privileged Votive Mass or the Mass of the day with commemorations from the Votive Mass. Thus a Nuptial Mass is permitted on Corpus Christi but it must be the Mass of that day with the appropriate commemorations and blessings from the Votive Mass.

All Souls' Day presents a special difficulty from the liturgical point of view because in all Masses of the Dead commemorations of the living are forbidden from *Rub. Gen. Miss.*, VII, 6, and on that day any Votive Mass is also forbidden. Therefore the rubric preceding the Votive Mass "pro Sponso et Sponsa" states that on All Souls' Day "et Missa votiva et solemnis benedictio nuptialis prohibentur", and this direction is printed *verbatim* in many diocesan directories on 2 November.

But it would be erroneous to suppose that in this context the words "solemnis benedictio nuptialis" refer to the form of Nuptial Blessing *extra Missam*.² It is permitted on All Souls' Day in places which enjoy the indult as we do in this country, but the text of the rubrics takes no account of this indult, and therefore excludes the possibility of a nuptial blessing whenever the rubrics forbid adding the appropriate portions from the Votive Mass to the Mass of the day. Similarly the rubric in *Addit. et Var.*, II, 2: "Haec porro benedictio nunquam dari potest extra Missam, si tum Missa pro Sponsis, tum eius commemoratio, ideoque benedictio locum habere nequeat" is considering the common law, not the indult.

E. J. M.

MARRIAGES OF CONVERTS

Converts being received into the Church are baptized conditionally, but usually there is no investigation whatever about the validity of marriage contracted whilst they were non-Catholics. Is this in order? (S. L.)

¹ Cf. CLERGY REVIEW, 1940, XVIII, p. 543.

² Cf. Payen, *De Matrimonio*, n. 1874, 3.

REPLY

Since marriage enjoys the favour of law, as stated in Canon 1014, it can usually be assumed that the marriages of converts are valid; they are ratified (become sacramental contracts) either at the time they were celebrated, if the parties were then baptized, or at the time of the conditional baptism of the converts, since non-Catholics when marrying amongst themselves are not bound by the canonical form. It is true, nevertheless, that occasionally the marriage is invalid, and though the parties may be ignorant of this fact, and therefore in good faith, convalidation is necessary when its invalidity is detected. Normally it would seem that the course of instruction which precedes reception into the Church should bring to notice any defect in the marriage.

If both parties are unbaptized they are bound only by the impediments of natural or divine law and, according to most canonists, by the form of marriage required by the State for the validity of the contract.

If baptized they are bound as well by all the impediments of ecclesiastical law, except "difference of worship" (Canon 1070, §1) since the promulgation of the Code, 19 May, 1918. Also, if an impediment is detected, they are bound by the ecclesiastical law which requires renewal of consent in some form or other (Canon 1134) whenever the marriage is convalidated by the ordinary method. Accordingly the priest will convalidate the marriages of these converts, immediately the defect is discovered, exactly as he would in the case of baptized Catholics. It should be noticed that if the diriment impediment has ceased to exist, e.g. "ligamen", owing to the death of the partner in a former marriage, renewal of consent is still required for convalidation.¹

It is not the common practice, unfortunately, to give the nuptial blessing to converts who are competent to receive it. But we may observe that the law permits the Nuptial Mass and blessing to be given at any time after the marriage "etiam postquam diu vixerint in matrimonio" (Canon 1101, §1), and it seems most desirable to take advantage of this law, provided the parties and the faithful understand that it is not a marriage which is taking place.

E. J. M.

KNOTTED ROSARY

It has been suggested by many people that a rosary made of knotted cord, the knots being instead of the usual beads, would be more suitable for the armed forces. Is there any objection to using this form of rosary? (S. H.)

¹ *Code Commission*, 3 June, 1918, ad 7.

REPLY

A rosary of knotted cords, or any other means of counting the prayers, may be used for the devotion. But in order to gain the many indulgences attached the Holy See requires firstly, that the rosary should be made of solid material, and the knotted article seems to come within this requirement. It is required, secondly, that the rosary should be in the accustomed form, which consists of beads or grains of some strong material strung together; the Holy Office (section of Indulgences), 13 March, 1909, replied "nihil esse innovandum" to a request that small medals of Our Lady should be allowed, instead of the usual beads, for separating the decades. There is no reply, so far as can be discovered, rejecting a rosary made of knotted cords, nor is the question discussed by the writers on the subject. It seems certain, however, that if medals may not take the place of grains, *a fortiori* the same must be said of knots. It would be an innovation, and the Church, in order not to cause astonishment to the faithful, is always averse to new modes being introduced into established devotions.

E. J. M.

PATRON SAINT

May a priest say the Mass and Office each year of his patron saint, who is in the Martyrology but not in the Kalendar, taking the text of Mass and Office from the Common? (E. O.)

REPLY

i. Provided he observes the usual liturgical rules about Votive Masses, he is not forbidden to say the Common as a Votive Mass. It is expressly permitted in the rubrics at the end of the first series of Votive Masses in our current Missal: "Item dici possunt Missae votivae . . . de omnibus canonizatis, in Martyrologio Romano descriptis, pro quibus Missa sumitur, sive propria, si habeatur, sive de Communi, mutatis mutandis, ut in Proprio Sanctorum assignatur. Quod si in Kalendario non inscribantur, omnia dicuntur de Communi, ad libitum sacerdotis."

ii. The rubrics of the Breviary do not permit a choice of office on certain days. The form in which it is recited must be that which corresponds to the Breviary and the Kalendar to which the priest is bound. Nevertheless many writers permit, two or three times a year, an alien office to be recited by a priest *devotionis causa*, provided it is not notably shorter than the proper office, and this opinion may safely be followed. Cf. St. Alphonsus, Lib. IV, n. 161, quær. 3.

E. J. M.

ROMAN DOCUMENTS

(i) SACRA CONGREGATIO CONCILII (N. 2938/41.)

Romae, die 19 Iulii, 1941.

Excellentissime Domine,

Examini subiectis precibus Excellentiae Tuae Rev. mae diei 3 Iunii u.e., circa applicationem Missae pro populo, haec Sacra Congregatio Concilii respondit obligationem applicandi Missam pro populo in Anglia urgere, non tantum in festis de praeceto et suppressis pro Ecclesia universalis, sed etiam in festis particularibus pro Anglia iuxta Primum Concilium Provinciale Westmonasterien.

Quoad vero praeteritas omissions in ista dioecesi Liverpolitan., eadem Sacra Congregatio per praesentes sanare intendit, sicut de facto sanat.

Interim omni quo par est obsequio me profiteor

Excellentiae Tuae Reverendissimae

uti fratrem

F. Card. Marmaggi, Praefectum

J. BRUNO, *Secretarius.*

Excellentissimo Domino

Dno Richardo Downey

Archiepiscopo

Liverpolitan.

The above reply, recently received by the Archbishop of Liverpool, and now published by kind permission of His Grace, settles a few points which have been disputed since the publication of the Code. By common law, residential bishops and parish priests are bound to apply Mass *pro populo* "... omnibus dominicis aliisque festis diebus de praeceto etiam suppressis." (Canon 339, §1.)

(i) The feasts of obligation throughout the whole Church, ten in number, are enumerated in Canon 1247. Some authors¹ were careful to note that the obligation to apply Mass *pro populo* existed even in places where some of these days were not observed as days of obligation. The Congregation of the Council, in 1934, replied in the affirmative to an English bishop who inquired about the obligation on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. It is now certain that the law requires the Mass to be offered *pro populo* also on the Feast of St. Joseph.

(ii) Suppressed holidays of the Universal Church presented a difficulty as soon as the Code was published. The Codex Commission, on being asked to specify those days, replied: "Nihil hac in re per Codicem iuris canonici immutatum esse a disciplina hucusque vigente."² This reply was none too illuminating, and it was not surprising that many Ordinaries petitioned the Congregation of the Council to clarify the position. The

¹ E.g., Slater, S.J., *Points of Church Law*, p. 61: Beste . . . *Introductio in Codicem*, p. 269.

² A.A.S., 1918, p. 170.

Congregation issued an *Index Festorum*,¹ which has been reproduced by some of the manualists. As a writer in this REVIEW (1933, Vol. V, p. 238) observed, a discrepancy arose in the practice of English dioceses, some following the newly published Index, while others retained the list of feasts authorized for the Vicars Apostolic in 1847. In favour of the conservative practice some appealed to the rule of Canon 4: ". . . indulta quae ab Apostolica Sede ad haec usque tempora personis sive physicis sive moralibus concessa, in usu adhuc sunt nec revocata, integra manent, nisi huius Codicis canonibus expresse revocentur". An argument might also have been drawn from the answer of the Codex Commission quoted above. The Congregation of the Council has now made it clear that while the rescript of 1847 must still be followed, it is not an *exclusive* source of obligation for those bound to apply Mass *pro populo*. To the list of days referred to in the rescript² must be added five of the suppressed feasts published in 1920, viz., The Purification and Nativity of Our Lady, The Dedication of St. Michael, the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, and the Feast of St. John the Apostle.

(iii) Three suppressed local feasts are included among those sanctioned by the Congregation of Propaganda in 1847: the feasts of St. Gregory the Great, St. Augustine, Apostle of England, and St. Thomas of Canterbury. It may appear superfluous to mention them explicitly in these notes, but it is desirable to do so in view of the teaching of two theologians, whose manuals enjoy a well-deserved popularity in England. Fr. Slater endeavoured to show that there was no obligation to apply the Mass *pro populo* on these three days,³ and the conclusion which he expressed somewhat tentatively was adopted by Fr. H. Davis, S.J., in his *Moral and Pastoral Theology* (Vol. III, p. 107). Fr. Davis has read the reply of 19 July, 1941, and he asks us to state that he has definitely abandoned Fr. Slater's view, which he now considers untenable. He holds that "the recent reply of the S.C.C. settles the matter in the sense that the three feasts aforesaid are days on which Mass *pro populo* must be said by those who are obliged to offer Mass *pro populo*". The necessary correction has already been made for the next edition of Fr. Davis's manual.

(iv) A *sanatio* is granted for the Archdiocese of Liverpool, to satisfy for omissions to apply the Mass *pro populo* on days when the obligation was not certain. This is in harmony with the practice of the Holy See, which is always liberal when there is question of *bona fides*. The need for a *sanatio* arises because the omission of the Masses constitutes a material violation of justice. Since, however, it is the duty of Superiors to specify the days when the Mass must be offered for the people, all priests satisfy their obligations in conscience by offering the Mass on the days indicated in their diocesan directories.

P. J. H.

¹ A.A.S., 1920, pp. 42-43.

² This list is published as an appendix to the Westminster Councils: *Decreta Quat. Conc. Prov. West.*, p. 87.

³ O.c., p. 61 ff.

(ii) SACRAE CONGREGATIONES DE RELIGIOSIS ATQUE DE SEMINARIIS ET STUDIORUM UNIVERSITATIBUS

DECRETUM : *De Alumnis Admittendis in Seminarium vel in Familiam Religiosam* (*A.A.S.*, 1941, XXXIII, p. 371).

Consiliis initis inter S. Congregationem de Religiosis et S. Congregationem de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus, decreta sunt quae sequuntur :

Antequam in Seminarium admittantur qui, quocumque titulo, ad familiam Religiosam pertinuerint, Ordinarius ad Sacram Congregationem de Seminariis et Studiorum Universitatibus recurrat, quae de iudicio suo Ordinarium certiores faciet, peractis iis omnibus quae casus ferat.

Itemque antequam familiae Religiosae adscribantur qui, quavis de causa, e Seminario egressi sint, Superiores Religiosi ad Sacram Congregationem de Religiosis recurrent, quae de suo iudicio Superiores certiores faciet, peractis iis omnibus quae casus ferat.

Quae omnia Ss^mus D. N. Pius Div. Prov. Papa XII approbare atque confirmare dignatus est atque publici iuris fieri mandavit.

Datum die 25 mensis Iulii a. 1941.

V. Card. LA PUMA, *Praefectus*.

I. Card. PIZZARDO, *Praefectus*.

The existing law on admitting ex-seminarists to a religious Order and ex-religious to a Seminary is found in Canons 544, §3, and 1363, §3. Generally speaking it may be said that a youth lacking the necessary qualities for the one will be found unsuited for the other; but superiors are often inclined to the view that a rejected seminarist would make an excellent religious, or that a rejected novice would fit admirably into a Seminary, and they are sometimes right. The present timely decree, by reserving a decision to the Roman Congregations, relieves the local superiors of responsibility. "Quocunque titulo" and "quavis de causa", it will be observed, are much wider terms than "postulant" or "dismissed" in the respective canons. They cover the cases of a youth who is being educated for a religious Institute, though not yet technically a postulant, and of a seminarist who has not been dismissed from the Seminary.

E. J. M.

(iii) PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO AD CODICIS CANONES AUTHENTICE INTERPRETANDOS

Responsa ad Proposita Dubia (*A.A.S.*, 1941, XXXIII, p. 378).

Emi Patres Pontificiae Commissionis ad Codicis canones authentice interpretandos, propositis in plenario coetu quae sequuntur dubiis, responderi mandarunt infra ad singula :

I. DE PRAECEDENTIA METROPOLITARUM

D. An ex Codice (cann. 106 n. 3, 272, 280, 285, 347) Archiepiscopus Metropolita, qua talis, extra suam provinciam praecedat Archiepiscopo non Metropolitae, seu Episcopis suffraganeis carenti.

R. Negative.

II. DE ARCHIVO SECRETO

D. Utrum verba canonis 379, §1 : *retento facti brevi summario cum textu sententiae definitivae*, referenda sint tantum ad causas, quae a decennio sententia condemnatoria absolutae sunt, an etiam ad causas, quarum rei vita cesserint.

R. Affirmative ad primam partem, negative ad secundam.

Datum Romae, e Civitate Vaticana, die 5 mensis Augusti, anno 1941.

M. Card. MASSIMI, Praeses.

(iv) SACRA CONGREGATIO CONCILII

INSTRUCTIO : *De Fidelibus Exhortandis ut Missae Sacrificio Frequenter ac Devote Intersint* (A.A.S., 1941, XXXIII, p. 389).

Saepenumero in tot rerum calamitatibus, quibus undique premimur, Ss̄mus Dominus Noster Pius PP. XII populum christianum ubique terrarum effusa caritate adhortatus est ut publicas privatasque preces effundat pro praesentibus societatis humanae necessitatibus et praesertim ad populorum pacem conciliandam, Divini Magistri promissiones recolens : "Petite et dabitur vobis, quaerite et invenietis, pulsate et aperietur vobis" (Matt. vii, 7; Luke xi, 9).

Hunc quoque in finem idem Ss̄mus Dominus Noster, Motu proprio *Norunt projecto* diei 27 Octobris 1940, Eucharistica Sacrificia ubique terrarum offerri iussit, quum nihil magis valeat "ad Numinis maiestatem placandam propitiandamque quam Eucharisticum Sacrificium, quo ipse humani generis Redemptor in omni loco sacrificatur et offertur . . . oblatio munda". Divinum enim Sacrificium quod in Missa peragitur et in quo, docente Tridentina Synodo : "idem ille Christus continetur et in cruento immolatur, qui in ara Crucis semel se ipsum cruento obtulit" (sess. XXII, cap. 2), non solum laudis et gratiarum actionis, sed etiam vere propitiatorium est tam pro vivis quam pro defunctis.

Quapropter populi christiani in saeculorum cursu nunquam destiterunt ut tam pro sui ipsorum necessitatibus quam pro fidelibus in Christo defunctis nondum ad plenum purgatis, a solis ortu usque ad occasum, haec oblatio munda offerretur, eidemque frequenter ac devote interesse consuevissent.

At, fide ac pietatis studio languescentibus, omnes norunt sanctissimum hunc morem in dies intermitte, atque fideles complures, divinarum rerum amore posthabito, Missae Sacrificium nec uti oportet colere, nec sicut antea pro suis necessitatibus ac defunctorum suffragiis ut applicetur ferventer curare, dum ad alia minus salutaria haud raro se convertere non dubitent.

Quapropter haec Sacra Congregatio Concilii, de speciali Ss̄mi Domini Nostri Pii Pp. XII mandato, omnes ubique terrarum Ordinarios vehementer hortatur, ut per semetipsos ac per curatores animarum aliosque utriusque cleri sacerdotes instanter christifideles edoceant :

1° de Sacrificii Missae natura et excellentia atque de eiusdem finibus ac salutaribus effectibus pro mundi vita, et demum de eiusdem ritibus ac caeremoniis, ut ipsi non passive tantum eidem intersint, sed cum sacerdotibus Sacrum peragentibus unum sint animo et corde, fide et caritate ;

2° de gravi, qua tenentur, obligatione Missam audiendi, quotquot rationis usu compotes sunt, diebus dominicis aliisque festis de praecepto (can. 1248, Codicis I. C.), quum agatur de praecipuo actu cultus externi et publici, Deo debiti, quo supremum in nos imperium Dei Ceatoris, Redemptoris et Conservatoris agnoscimus ;

3° de Sacrificii Missae vi impetratoria et propitiatoria, qua bene perspecta ac cognita, fideles allicantur ad eidem Sacro frequenter ac etiam quotidie, si fieri potest, adsistendum, ad gratias Deo agendas, ad beneficia obtinenda, ad peccata expienda cum propria tum eorum qui vita sunt functi, memores moniti Sancti Augustini : "Audeo dicere quod Deus, cum esset omnipotens, plus dare non potuit; cum esset sapientissimus, plus dare nescivit; cum esset ditissimus, plus dare non habuit" (tract. 84 in Ioannem) ;

4° de coelestis convivii saluberrima participatione quoties Sacro intersunt, quo arctius Christo adhaereant, prout est in Decreto huius Sacrae Congregationis diei 20 Decembris 1905 *De quotidiana SS. Eucharistiae sumptione*, et ad mentem eiusdem Tridentinae Synodi : "Optaret quidem sacrosancta Synodus ut in singulis Missis fideles adstantes non solum spirituali affectu, sed sacramentali etiam Eucharistiae perceptione communicarent, quo ad eos sanctissimi huius Sacrificii fructus uberior proveniret" (sess. XXII, cap. 6), iuxta illud ipsius Iesu Christi : "Ego sum panis vivus qui de coelo descendvi. Qui manducat ex hoc pane vivet in aeternum. Qui manducat me et ipse vivet propter me" (Ioann. vi) ;

5° de dogmate Sanctorum communionis, cuius vi Sacrificium Missae uberrime applicatur non tantum pro fidelibus defunctis, qui piaculari igne suas expiant humanas labes, sed etiam pro hominibus qui vitam degunt, quippe qui, tot tantisque angustiis et calamitatibus, in praesens potissimum, undique pressi, indigent ut misericordiam apud Deum inveniant et auxilium consequantur.

Quo vero facilius locorum Ordinarii ceterique animarum curatores haec praescripta in rem deducant, saepius fideles revocent ad vitam secundum Christi praecepta vere componendam, ea omnia in sui vivendi ratione devitantes, quae fidem moresque christianos vel minus deceant. Quare improbare ne cessent immodosus sumptus, quos fideles vanitate adlecti, in variis vitae adjunctis aliquando insunt, illo quandoque praetermissio Sacrificio Missae, quod omnium cumulate suffragiorum et gratiarum potissimum adiumentum et divitiarum Dei infinitus est thesaurus.

Denique ad omnia haec assequenda curatores animarum adiutricem requirant operam Confraternitatum seu Sodalitatum Sanctissimi Sacramenti, quae in unaquaque paroecia, ad normam canonis 711, §2, Codicis I. C., ideo praecipue institutae sunt, ut omnibus fidelibus exemplo auxilioque sint in praestando atque alendo cultu Eucharistico.

Quodsi, Deo favente, populus christianus huiusmodi hortationibus Ordinariorum et curatorum animarum alacri animo obsequutus fuerit, Eucharisticum Sacrificium, quo nihil Deo honorabilius nihil iucundius esse potest, fiet revera pro totius mundi salute fons vitae et sanctitatis.

Datum Romae, die 14 mensis Iulii, anno 1941.

F. Card. MARMAGGI, *Praefectus.*

Liturgists will note the recommendation in n. i urging the faithful to unite themselves in the Mass with the priest at the altar, a participation which is normally, but by no means exclusively, secured through following the Mass in the Missal. Unity with the priest, in mind and heart, in faith and in charity, is possible whilst reciting the Rosary and Litany of Our Lady in public, but it is not the most obvious method of assisting at Mass, and many think that this Leonine October devotion has now, perhaps, served its purpose, and could profitably be suspended. The prominent point of the above Instruction is that, at times of national crisis, the devotion of the people should be centred on the Mass rather than on other acts of divine worship.

E. J. M.

(v) SEGRETERIA DI STATO

Con Biglietti della Segreteria di Stato, il Santo Padre Pio XII, felicemente regnante, si è degnato di nominare: (*A.A.S.*, 1941, XXXIII, p. 342.)

17 maggio 1941. L'III^{mo} e Rev^{mo} Monsig. PATRIZIO BOYLAN, *Consultore della Commissione Pontificia per gli Studi Biblici.*

CHURCH MANAGEMENT

OUR GUARDIANSHIP OF THE ALTAR

WE have to thank the liturgical movement of our own times for recalling the old truth that the altar represents Christ Himself. There can be no denying that this profound mystical conception had become obscured, and that in spite of long familiarity with the terms, a timely restatement came to many of us as a ray of illumination. The subject is expounded at full length in the *Pontificale Romanum* as part of the rite of ordination of subdeacons; it is mentioned in our English *Ritus Servandus*; it is explained in the lessons of the second nocturn in the Office for the Dedication of the Lateran. It would be interesting to discover whether the fearsome crop of unliturgical altars, overloaded with gradines and toppling superstructures, which sprang up during the second half of the nineteenth century and still lingers on, was due to a failure to appreciate the true liturgical teaching, or whether, vice-versa, it was the presence of so many irregularities which led to indifference or neglect in regard to this important truth.

A lively understanding of the idea that the altar is Christ Himself, and of all that this implies, must inevitably lead to an ever-increasing love and reverence for the altar of one's own church, and to precautions against the slightest traces of negligence or abuse. No priest would ever knowingly treat his altar with disrespect; nevertheless, he should be watchful lest acts of impropriety, in all innocence, be committed by those to whom the care of the altar has been committed.

A common act of irreverence is to stand or kneel upon the table of the altar for some such purpose as arranging flowers or erecting contrivances for the support of superfluous flowers and candles. Surely it is a shocking sight to see anyone, whether sacristan or server or, still worse, a lady helper or a nun, actually standing upon the consecrated site of the Sacrifice, the most sacred representation of Christ. And yet this is frequently done by devout persons who would be horrified at the thought of treading upon a crucifix. Unfortunately there are not a few altars so placed against the wall or hampered by having a lofty reredos that the only way of cleaning or repairing windows or masonry is to stand upon the table. This is a point which may well be considered by those responsible for future planning.

It is forbidden to use any space behind and beneath the altar as a place of storage; a proper sense of reverence would extend this prohibition to the space between the altar and the wall. One occasionally finds this space used as a convenient place for keeping spare vases and candle-sticks, and even brooms and pails.

Those of us who are sufficiently observant always come away favourably impressed after saying Mass as a visitor at an altar where the cloths are spotlessly clean, and correspondingly depressed when they are dirty and

neglected. But it sometimes happens that those who are scrupulously careful about clean linen forget to wipe away dirt which accumulates unnoticed upon the cerecloth. Unless the cloths are turned back for frequent dusting, layers of dirt will collect in the narrow space where the hem approaches the gradine. An altar should be cleared and covered after the last Mass, but the customary green covers require watching: they may easily become saturated with dirt and instruments of soiling rather than of protection. A lining of linen or cotton is advisable, and this should be taken off and washed at reasonable intervals.

If our sacristans and servers treat the altar with seeming carelessness, it is because they have not been taught to realize its supremely sacred character; we should therefore consider it a duty to give them an instruction from time to time. We need not stop there. The subject would be a good one, full of practical inferences, for a Sunday evening sermon, and a text will be found in the Office of the Dedication of the Lateran where we are told how "the altar, anointed with oil, denotes Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Altar, Victim and Priest". The faithful are anxious to learn about matters of this kind, and perhaps we are too much inclined to take for granted that they know more than they actually do.

J. P. R.

BOOK REVIEWS

Little Brother Jesus. By Sister Mary Barbara, C.R.L. (Burns Oates & Washbourne. 6d. and 9d.)

HERE is the best form of child's Prayer Book, very simply and happily phrased, and delightfully illustrated. There is a picture facing every page of printed words, a highly coloured prayer-picture that the youngest eyes may read even before they can interpret the prayers in words.

Although the phraseology is childlike and natural, it could be bettered here and there—but only here and there. For instance, it is questionable whether a child would get an altogether desirable impression of its soul from this : "If ever I am naughty and make my woolly coat muddy, I will run to you and tell you all about it." However, this is a rare exception in a quite charming little work. In Sister Mary Barbara a thousand of God's little ones will find a very helpful friend.

Prayers for Confession and Holy Communion for God's Little Sixes and Sevens. (Turner's Catholic Press, Nottingham. 3d.)

THIS is another booklet of prayers for very young children, prayers of precisely the right kind, simple and direct, illustrated with a few well-chosen pictures. The words are as far as possible all of one syllable, but where longer words are unavoidable they are broken up into single parts, so that a child may read the book all to himself—which is what he loves to do. Only in one place does a slight remodelling of the phraseology seem desirable : in the *Act of Contrition* : "You made me" and "You gave me" would be preferable to the form used, especially as "I have sinned" follows.

For this remarkably cheap booklet, even cheaper rates are made for dozens and hundreds ; and copies with a special "First Communion" cover are soon to be available. It is difficult to think of a more appropriate set of prayers for enabling a child to grasp the meaning of the Sacraments at his earliest acquaintance with them. This little work will assuredly become extremely popular.

L. T. H.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE TEACHING OF DOGMATIC THEOLOGY (CLERGY REVIEW, 1941, XXI, pp, 9, 186, 308)

"Romanus" writes :

May a professor of dogma, who in a small way for several years has been using the tutorial method to supplement his lectures, venture into the lists to support "Paedagogus"? Father "C" "re-acts against the movement to substitute the teaching methods of modern non-Catholic Universities for the traditional and well-tried methods of Catholic Seminaries". I think no one is suggesting "substitution", for dogmatic lectures must always be of primary importance, but tutorials give regular opportunities for personal contact, stimulate, help in difficulties, show the student how to use sources, and how to see current events in the light of dogma (a relationship which it may be difficult to convey without individual explanations), and sometimes lead him to develop some special interest and to use his pen for the Church. In short, they help to an understanding of theological thought, to a sympathy for it and to some ability to exercise it after ordination.

The practical difficulty will generally be that of time, since more lectures are necessary for those attending a theological course than in a University, while professors of theology tend to be very busy men. But I suggest that even two tutorials a term, with corresponding essays, prove of great advantage. And professors should be less busy!

Father "C" appeals to the ways of Catholic centres such as Rome. The method advocated by "Paedagogus" was certainly in use in the Catholic faculty of theology at Munich and to some extent at Louvain. Speaking of Rome, it is not Roman to reject useful aids to teaching methods, nor indeed is this the tradition of the great Catholic Doctors. St. Basil or St. Gregory Nazianzen would have been surprised to be told that they should not learn anything from the methods of the pagan Schools of Athens, or St. Athanasius or Clement from Alexandria, or St. Augustine from the Neo-Platonists, or St. Jerome from his Rabbis. It is even said that St. Thomas introduced the methods of a heathen philosopher! Obviously the vast audiences of the Gregorian do not lend themselves to tutorial methods, but ten years ago one smaller Roman Pontifical University contained two young dogma professors of distinction who both used the heuristic method in some degree—I mean a thorough examination of Scriptural and patristic sources leading on to speculation and showing the theological reasons for the definitions when they came—while both encouraged personal discussion, and there existed a system of "seminaria" which included at least the nucleus idea of a tutorial class.

Catholic teachers are rightly jealous of their great traditions, but we shall never convert England unless we are ready to profit by anything good she can give us. *Omnia probate : quod bonum est, tenete.*

ALTAR WINE
(CLERGY REVIEW, 1941, XXI, p. 246)

Mr. G. C. Joyce writes :

I have read the very interesting article of J.P.R. on Altar Wine in the October number of the CLERGY REVIEW, and I agree with practically all that he says. May I, as a humble layman, be permitted to add a few general remarks on the subject of altar wine, which might be of interest to the Clergy ?

On one point only am I slightly at variance with J.P.R., and that is on his remark that altar wine is considered as the humblest and most feeble of the vinous family. As a member of one of the leading Altar Wine business houses in the country, I would stress that altar wine is regarded as being of the highest importance, both because its sacred use is regulated by the instructions of the Holy See and also because of the need for observing the prescriptions laid down in the Preface to the Missal concerning the "Matter" of the Holy Sacrifice.

I should like further to endorse J.P.R.'s remarks on the storage of altar wines. Many a case of these sensitive wines has been ruined by being stored in an uneven temperature, and this point is one which cannot be too thoroughly stressed.

Finally it may be observed that, owing to the lack of shipping space, the problem of obtaining these wines is becoming very serious, and I would venture to suggest that great economy be practised in the filling of the cruets.

"PERICULUM MATRIMONII CIVILIS"
(CLERGY REVIEW, 1941, XXI, pp. 177, 309)

"P. P. Secundus" writes :

A layman the other day pointed out to me in a Catholic paper the Holy Father's words to the effect that no human law can deny the natural right to marry. He asked me if this natural right included the right to choose one's partner, and perhaps inadvertently I said yes. "How then," he asked, "can the Church's law forbid mixed marriages, in a country like England?"

I had no answer ready, but I think some such reasoning is dimly in the minds of those who say they would go to the Registry Office if the dispensation were refused.

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